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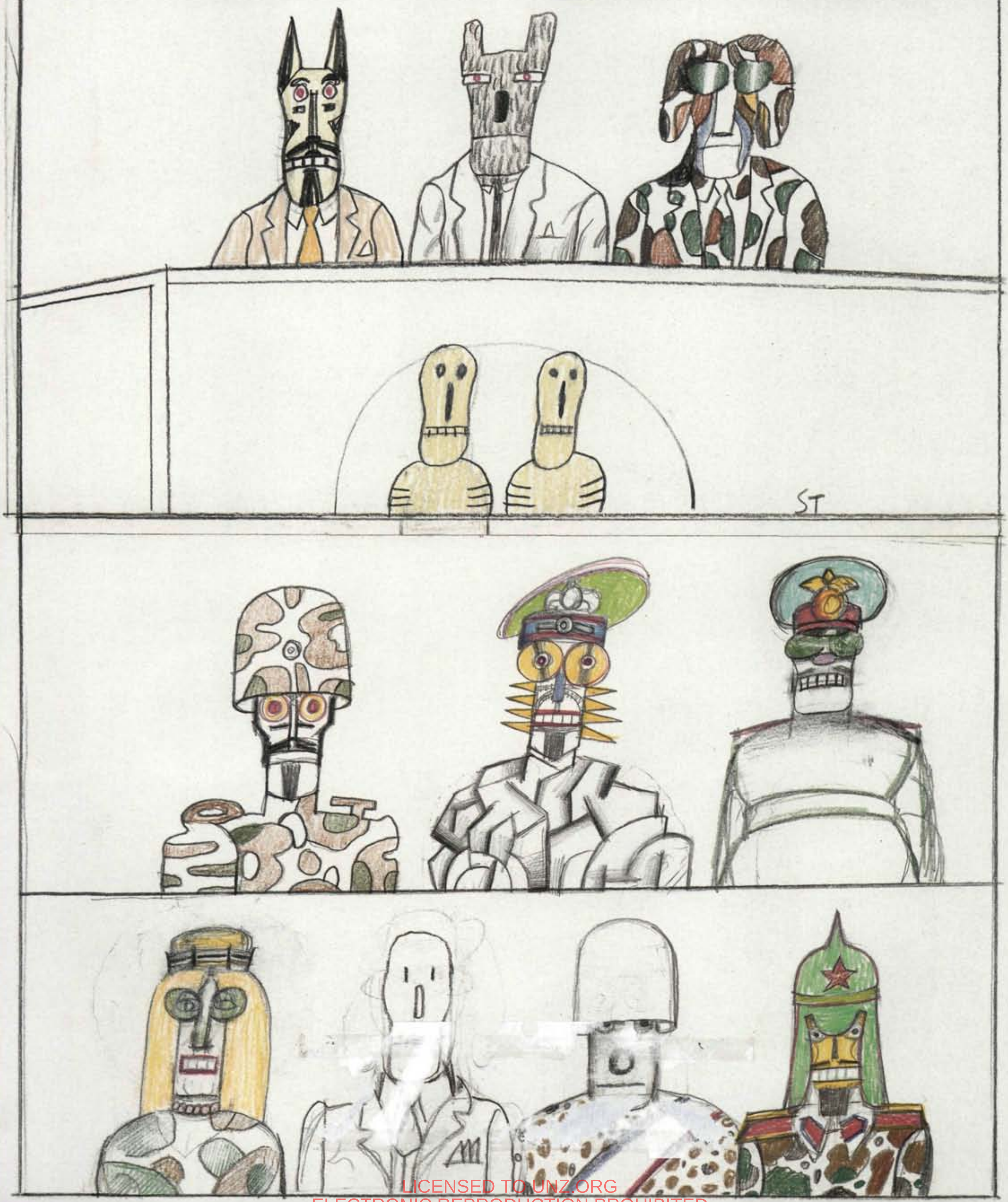

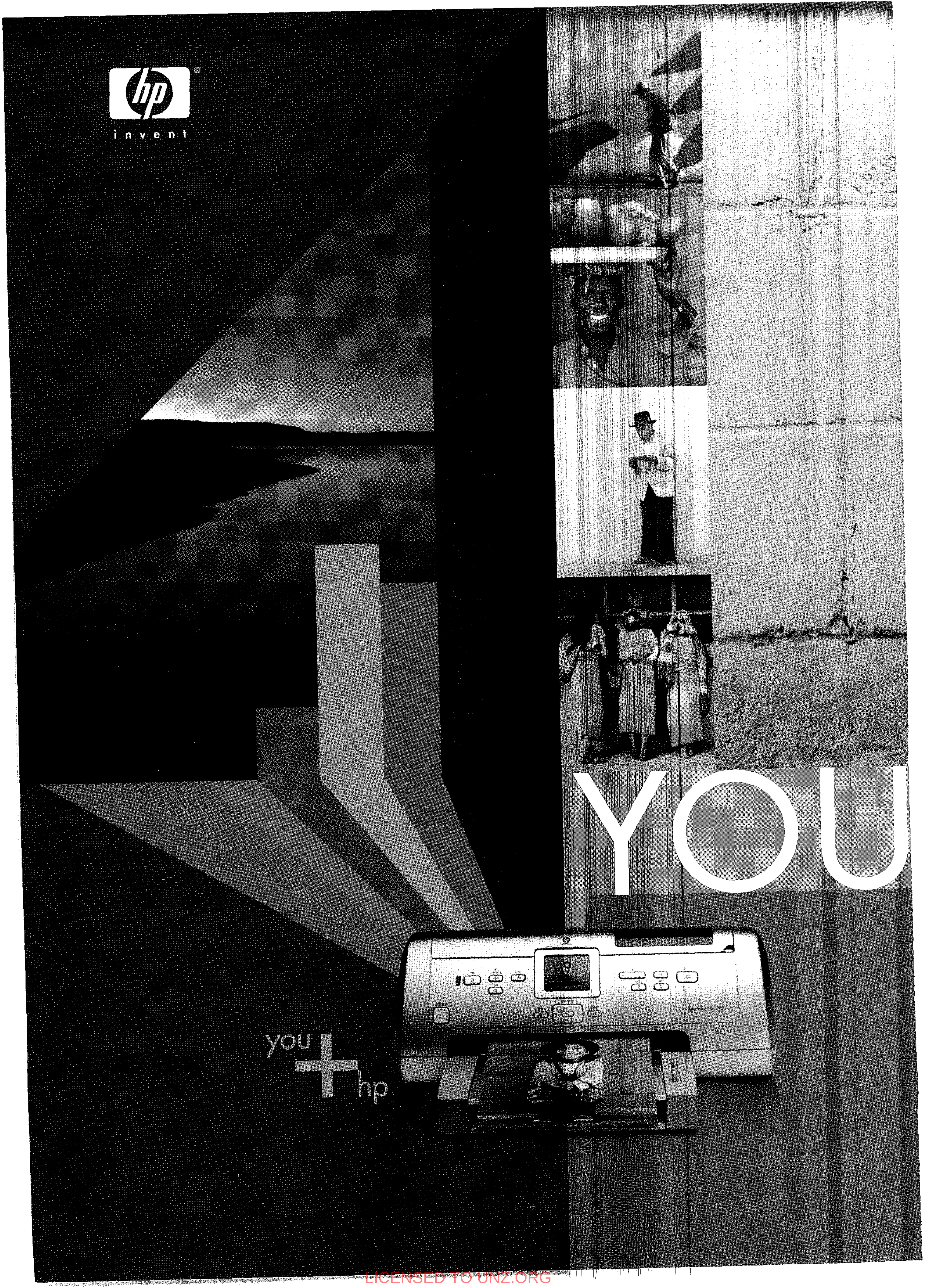
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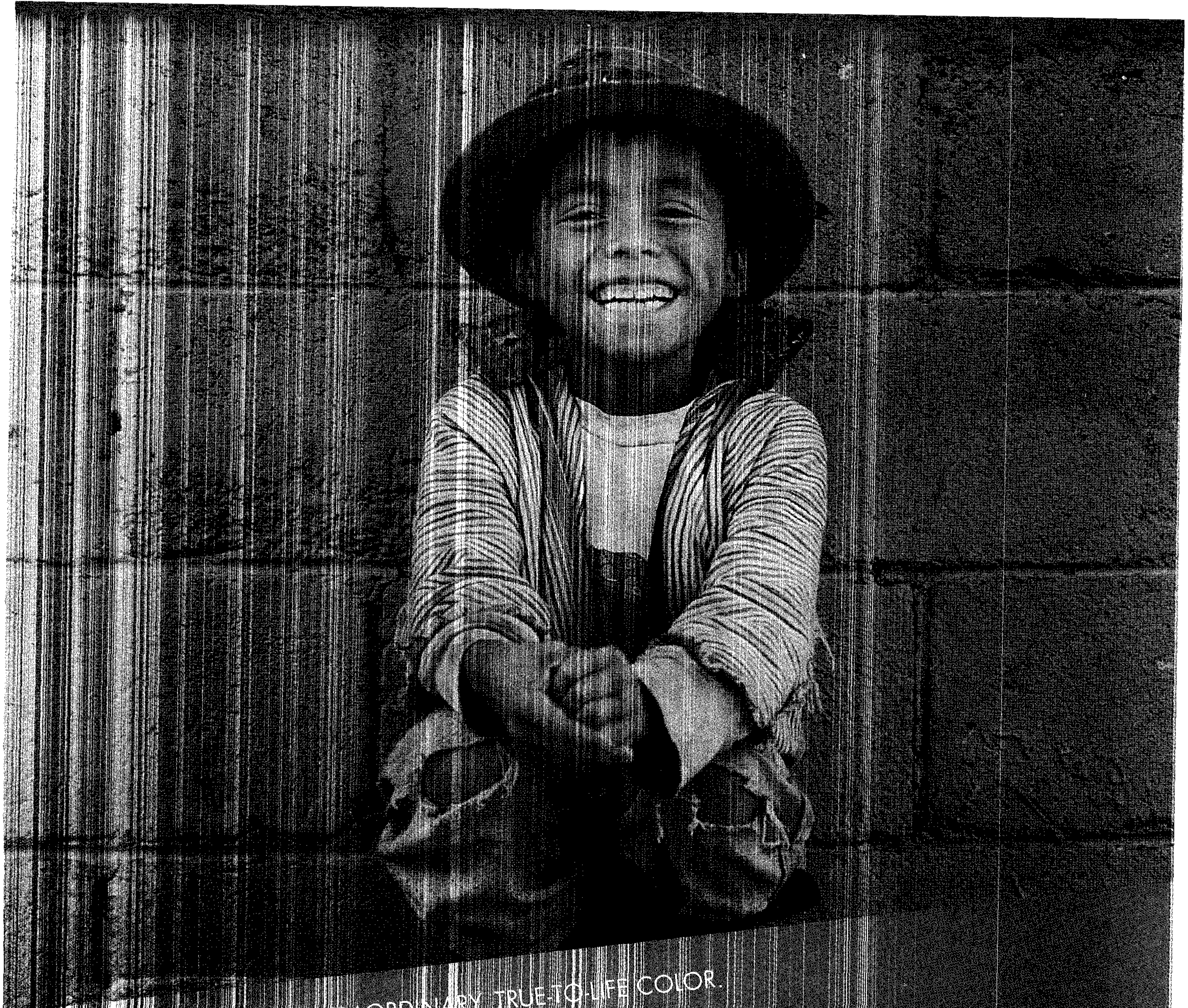
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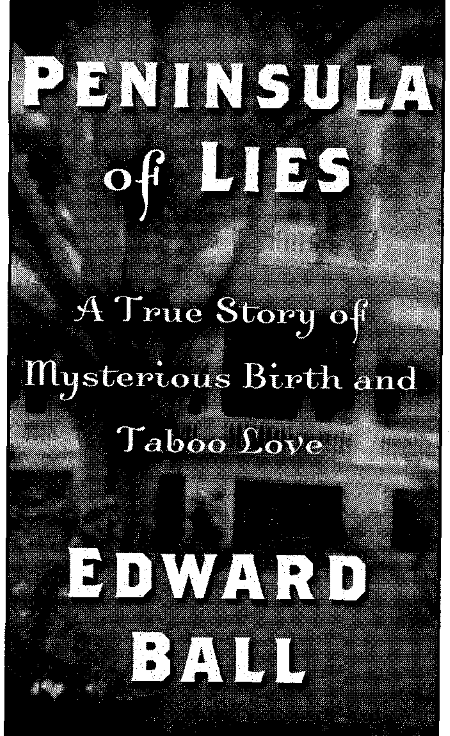
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MARCH 8, 2004

8 GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN
25 THE TALK OF THE TOWN
Nader's new raid; Gospel truths.

Seymour M. Hersh 32 ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY
The Deal
Nuclear traders and the hunt for bin Laden.
George Saunders 38 CASUAL
My Amendment
Kevin Conley 42 THE SPORTING SCENE
Be Like Dee
UConn's Diana Taurasi takes over.
Claudia Roth Pierpont 48 ANNALS OF CULTURE
The Measure of America
The anthropologist who fought racism.
Dan Baum 64 A REPORTER AT LARGE
The Casualty
Coming home from Iraq, with wounds.
Hanif Kureishi 74 FICTION
"Long Ago Yesterday"

THE CRITICS
Sasha Frere-Jones 80 POP MUSIC
Arthur Russell's dance music.
Peter Schjeldahl 83 THE ART WORLD
Parmigianino at the Frick.
BOOKS
Elizabeth Kolbert 85 *The mom problem.*
91 Briefly Noted
John Lahr 88 THE THEATRE
"Fiddler on the Roof," "Bridge and Tunnel."
Photograph by Richard Avedon.
David Denby 92 THE CURRENT CINEMA
"Goodbye, Lenin!," "Osama."

POEMS
Mary Oliver 35 "Some Things, Say the Wise Ones"
Eliza Griswold 57 "How-To"
Wislawa Szymborska 66 "A Little Girl Tugs at the Tablecloth"

COVER *by Saul Steinberg* THE BACK PAGE *"Studio Script Notes on 'The Passion,'" by Steve Martin* DRAWINGS *Robert Mankoff, Mike Twohy, Mick Stevens, Victoria Roberts, Michael Maslin, Danny Shanahan, Charles Barsotti, David Sipress, Bruce Eric Kaplan, Edward Koren, Matthew Diffee, Roz Chast, Frank Cotham, Jack Ziegler, Tom Cheney, Alex Gregory*

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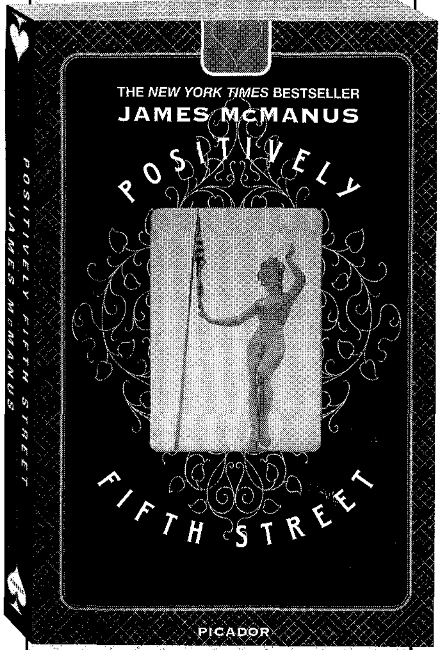

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Dan Baum ("The Casualty," p. 64) has written two books, "Smoke and Mirrors" and "Citizen Coors: An American Dynasty." He lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Saul Steinberg (Cover), who died in 1999, made this cover in 1974. An exhibition, "Steinberg: An Intimate View of His Art and World," is on view at the School of Visual Arts, in New York.

Claudia Roth Pierpont ("The Measure of America," p. 48) is the author of "Passionate Minds," a collection of essays about women writers.

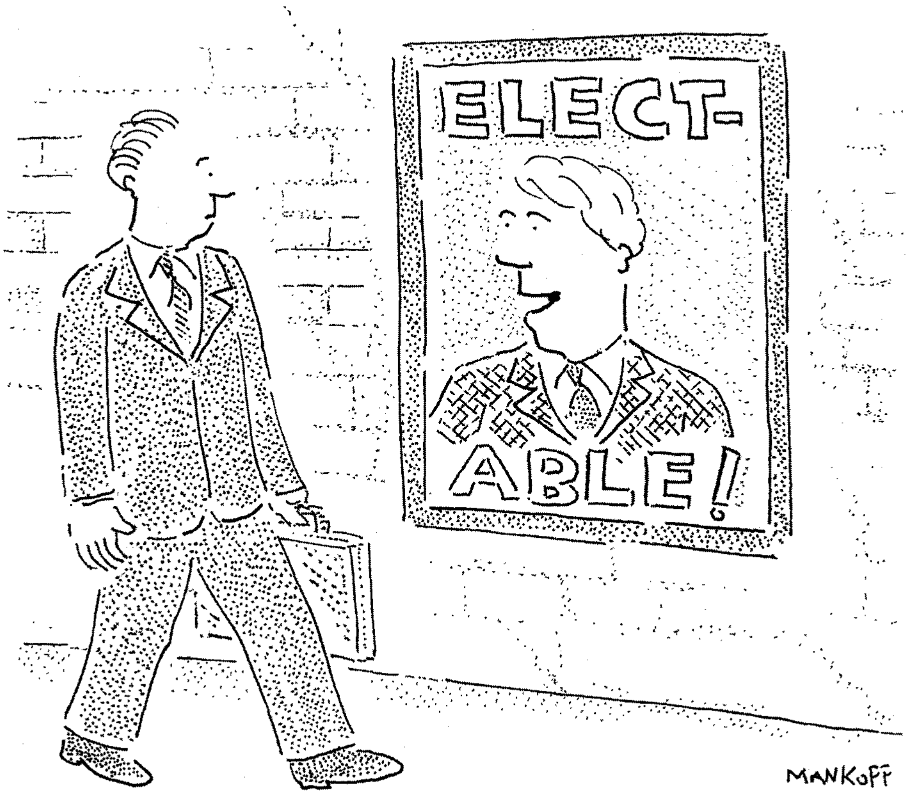
Mark Alan Stamaty (Sketchbook, p. 59) wrote and illustrated "Who Needs Donuts?," which was published in 1973 and reissued last October.

Hanif Kureishi (Fiction, p. 74) is the author of two short-story collections and five novels, including "The Body," which came out last month.

Sasha Frere-Jones (Pop Music, p. 80) is a writer and musician living in New York.

Elizabeth Kolbert (Books, p. 85) is a staff writer. Her book "The Prophet of Love: And Other Tales of Power and Deceit" will be published in May.

Steve Martin (The Back Page, p. 94), whose latest book is "The Pleasure of My Company," will appear in a movie based on his novella "Shopgirl." ♦



THE MAIL

AMERICA'S WORLD

George Packer, in his celebration of the willingness of liberal internationalists, in the years between the Second World War and Vietnam, to use American power to affirm the values of democracy in other countries, is selective in his history ("A Democratic World," February 16th & 23rd). He mentions the Marshall Plan, but neglects Washington's hand in overthrowing elected leaders in Iran, Congo, and Guatemala, and its support for a repressive Saudi royal family in return for cheap oil. He barely pauses to examine the roots of Vietnam. Packer argues that liberals should accept the burden of civilizing other countries, while empire-building conservatives argue that we should reshape the world to meet our needs because we are strong enough to do so. Ultimately, these arguments are two sides of the same coin: both deny people self-rule, tell the ruled peoples that we know their interests better than they do, and drag us into situations like Iraq.

Parker Everett
Chicago, Ill.

Packer argues that conservatives today think "hard about America's place in the world," while liberals are not willing "to grapple with the world as it is." But liberals, and not conservatives, have done most of the critical thinking about the downside of globalization, the effect of the insistence upon open markets in places that have no civil institutions to check them, and America's support for corrupt regimes. What "ideas" have conservatives contributed to the subject, apart from a preoccupation with American power, which they too often define as the exercise of military force?

Robert Boyers
Prof. of Arts and Letters, Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

DEAN LOVE

Philip Gourevitch describes Howard Dean's following as consisting of fragile cyber communities: "insular and sustained by collective belief rather than by any external reality" ("The Shakeout," February 9th). But a hallmark of the campaign was its creation of face-to-face political communities. Apart from the volunteers who knocked on doors, hundreds of thousands of strangers came together at Dean Meetups, House Parties, Victory Days, and even Dean Super Bowl Parties—not to reiterate orthodoxies but to discuss their ideas and concerns. These contacts were a better experience in participatory democracy than any television-based campaign.

Jacob Dee
Chicago, Ill.

VOICES OF THE CARIBBEAN

In his Profile of Derek Walcott, Hilton Als remarks that Walcott "has documented life in a place most Americans think of in terms of sunblock and steel drums," and that his work "revels in . . . the differences of a people generally misunderstood, if they are thought about at all" ("The Islander," February 9th). In support, Als quotes authorities such as Seamus Heaney, Robert Pinsky, and Elizabeth Hardwick. But there are others who could have made this point, while providing a broader picture of Caribbean letters. They include younger St. Lucian poets like Jane King and Kendel Hippolyte; important (if not internationally eminent) poets of the wider Anglophone Caribbean, such as the Jamaicans Lorna Goodison, Olive Senior, and Mervyn Morris, the Guyanese David Dabydeen, and the Trinidadian-Guyanese Ian McDonald; or scholars like Patricia Ismond, of St. Lucia, Edward Baugh, of Jamaica, and Kenneth Ramchand, of Trinidad—all of whom would acknowledge Walcott as a founding genius of the tradition they work within.

Nicholas Laughlin
Diego Martin, Trinidad

•

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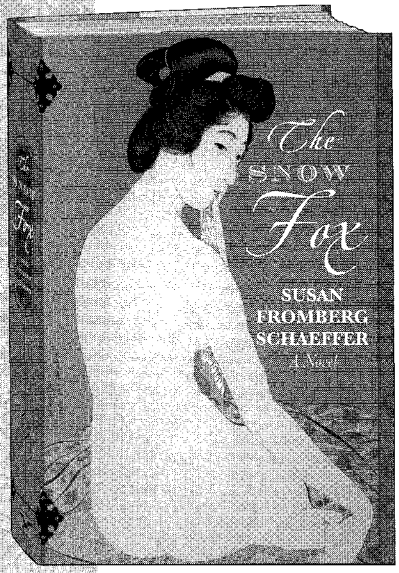

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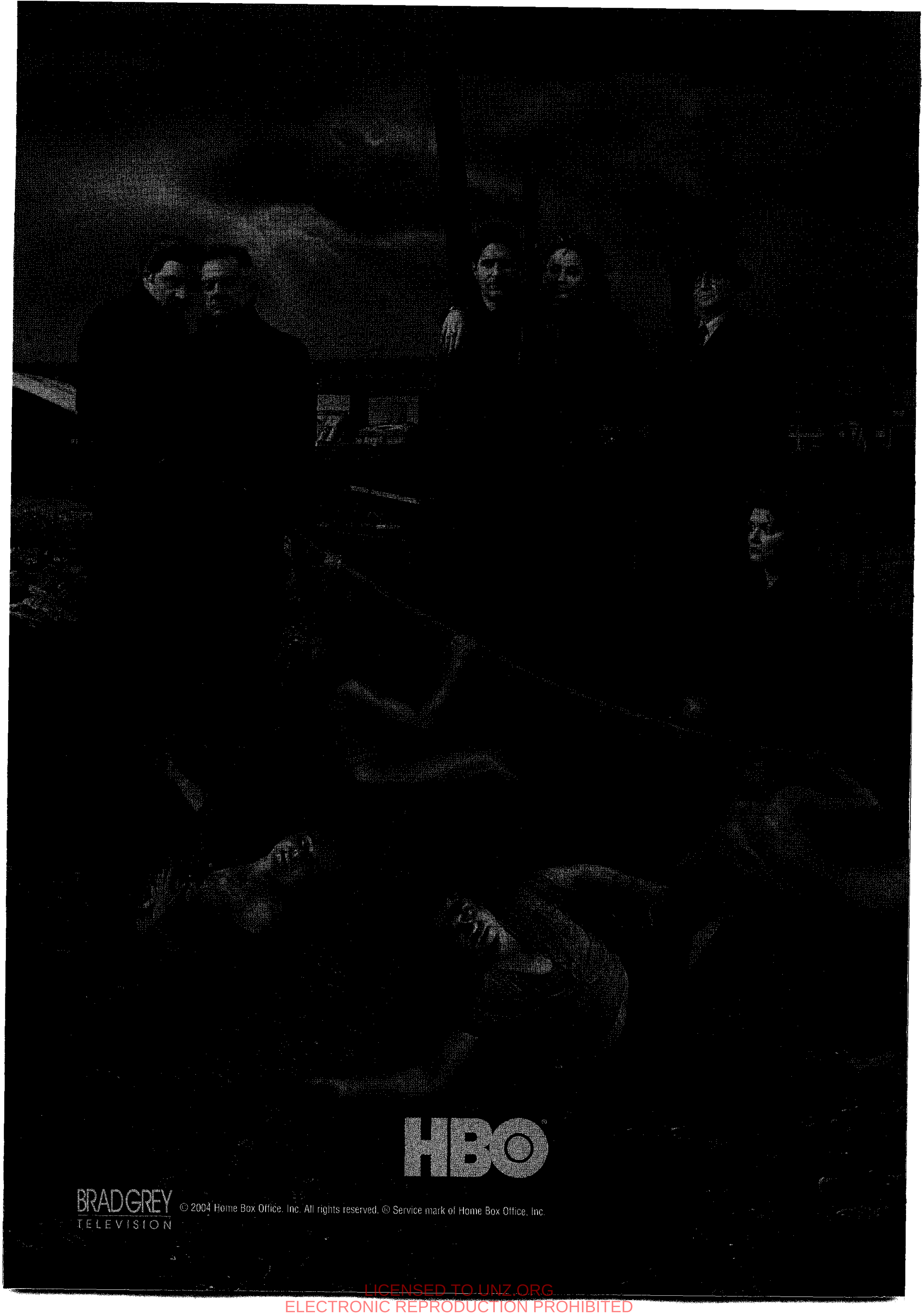
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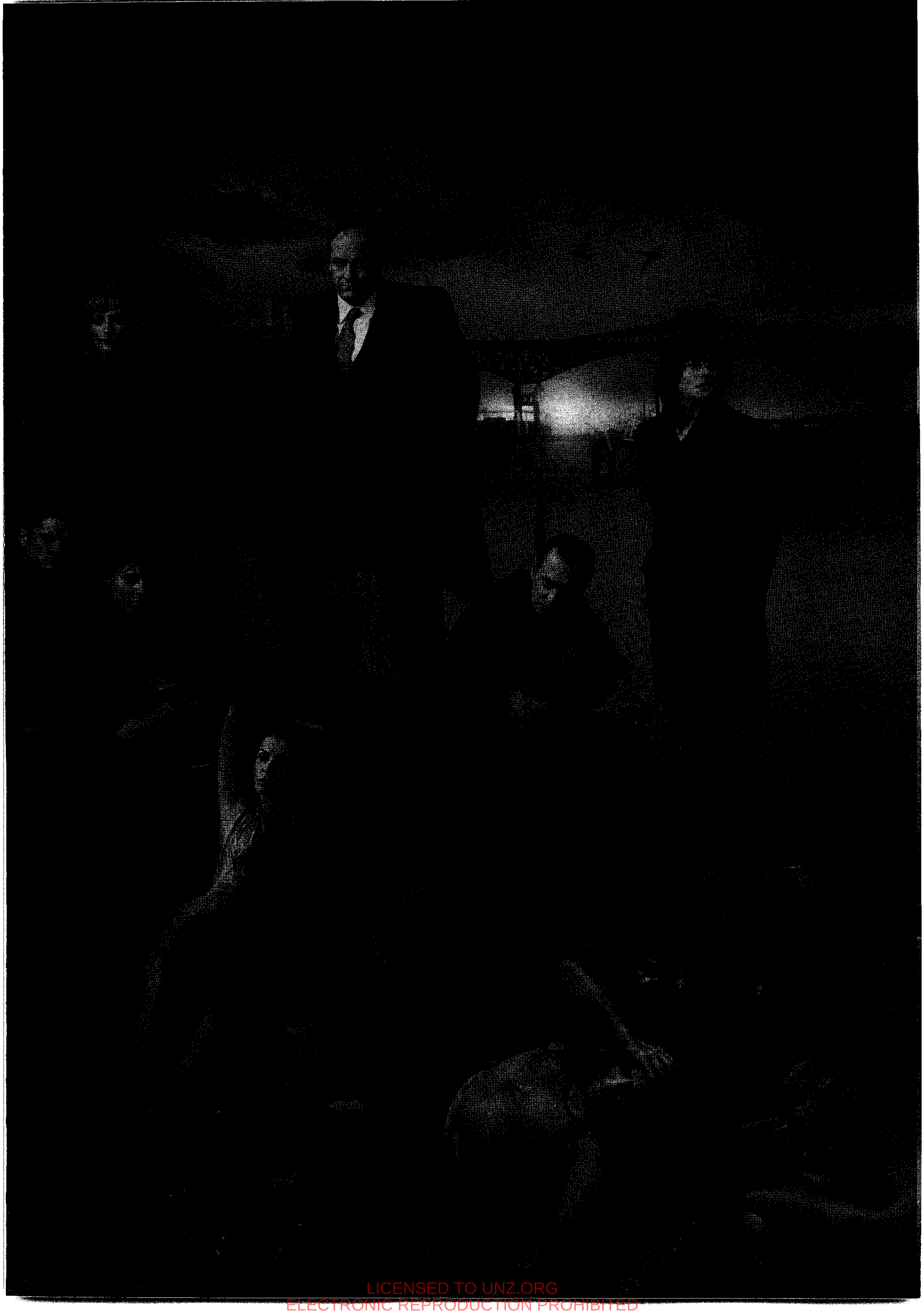
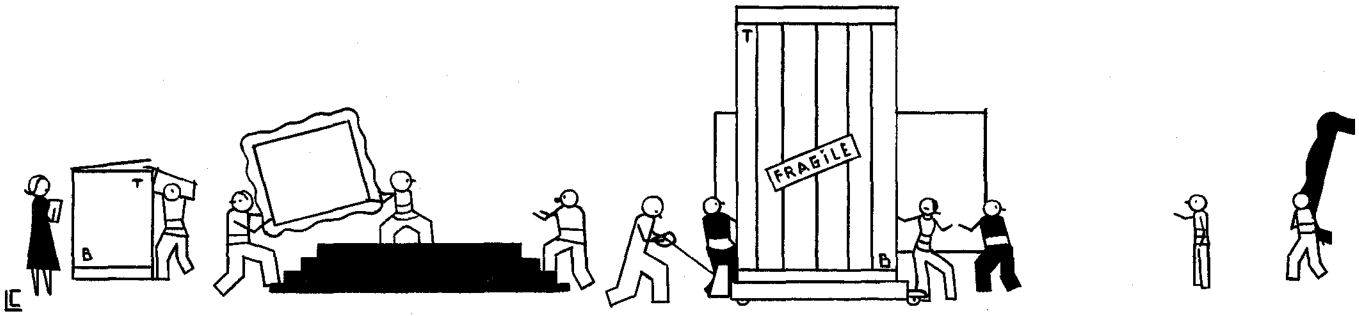


GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



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For expanded events listings, please visit www.newyorker.com/goingson.

THIS WEEK

KICKING BACK

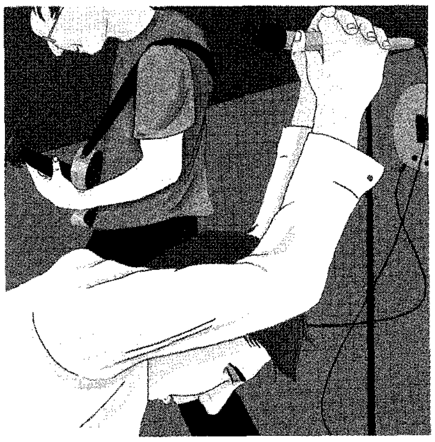
The Undertones were one of the first Irish punk bands with a pop hit: "Teenage Kicks," an ode to romantic awkwardness that was propelled by the tremulous vocals of Feargal Sharkey. In 1983, after releasing a number of other speedy, endearing singles, including "What's with Terry?" and "My Perfect Cousin," the Undertones folded when Sharkey opted for a solo career. Now the brothers John and Damian O'Neill, two other members of the original group, have returned with a new vocalist, Paul McLoone, and "Get What You Need," an album that actually measures up to the band's old material. (March 4-5, Knitting Factory; see Night Life.)

THE KIDS STAY IN THE PICTURE

This is the best weekend of the year for knee-high cinephiles and the parents who love them. The BAMkids Film Festival will screen forty-six movies from twenty-two countries; the programs are grouped by age, beginning with "Bunnies, Buddies, Bugs, and Bears," for two-to-five-year-olds. Brooklyn, along with Manhattan and Queens, also hosts the New York International Children's Film Festival, which includes the U.S. première of "A Wrinkle in Time," an adaptation of the Madeleine L'Engle classic. (See Movies.)

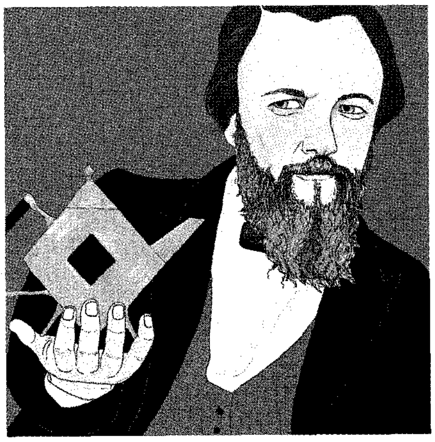
SNAPPY DRESSER

The designer Christopher Dresser, born in Glasgow in 1834 and trained as a botanist, was smitten with geometric forms early on. Unlike many of his peers, he embraced mass production, and items like his glazed ceramic bowls, metal teapots with exposed rivets, and silver-plated toast racks made their way into middle-class Victorian homes. On the centennial of Dresser's death, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum has assembled a retrospective that includes textiles, wallpaper, furniture, ceramics, and more. (Opens March 5; see Art.)



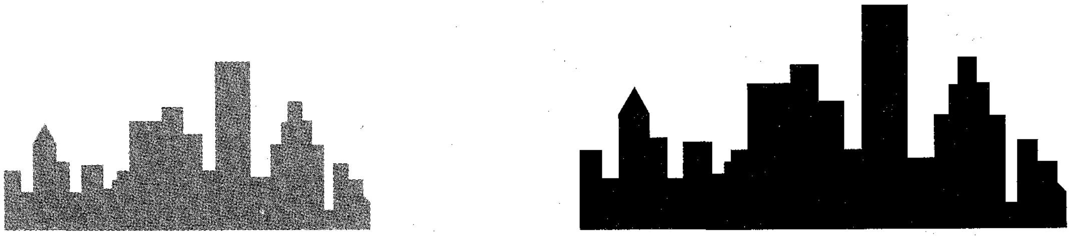
The Undertones bring their grownup Irish punk to the Knitting Factory.

A weekend of international films for children, in two separate festivals.



LARA TOMLIN

The designs of Christopher Dresser, at the Cooper-Hewitt.



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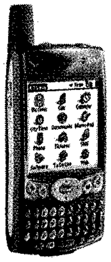

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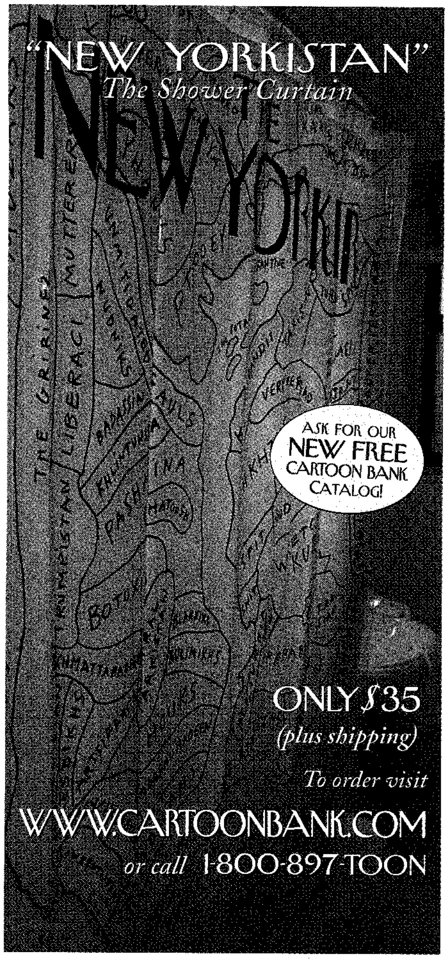
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THE THEATRE
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

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AUTOBAHN
Five new one-act plays by Neil LaBute, all of them set inside a car, receive a staged reading by Brian Dennehy, Amanda Peet, Susan Sarandon, Paul Rudd, and others in a benefit performance for MCC Theatre. March 8 at 8. (Little Shubert, 422 W. 42nd St. 212-727-7765.)

COOKIN'
The slapstick, "Iron Chef"-gone-haywire comedy from Seoul comes to the Minetta Lane Theatre for an open run. Conceived and directed by Seung Whan Song. In previews. Opens March 7 at 7. (18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 212-420-8000.)

EMBEDDED
In a timely satire written and directed by Tim Robbins, media frenzy and front-line blunders attend a conflict in the Middle East. A production of the Actors' Gang. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200.)

FROZEN
Swoosie Kurtz, Brían F. O'Byrne, and Laila Robins star in the New York première of a drama by the British playwright Bryony Lavery. Directed by Doug Hughes. In previews. (East Thirteenth Street Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 212-279-4200.)

IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST REVISITED
The playwright Adrian Hall has reworked his 1985 play about the convicted killer Jack Henry Abbott (whose published correspondence with Norman Mailer made him a star of the Manhattan literary scene for a time, until he murdered again) in the wake of Abbott's suicide, in February of 2002. Leo Farley directs. In previews. Opens March 8 at 8. (29th Street Repertory, 212 W. 29th St. 212-868-4444.)

JOHNNY GUITAR
A new musical based on Nicholas Ray's film has a book by Nicholas van Hoogstraten, music by Martin Silvestri, and additional music and lyrics by Joel Higgins, who directs. Previews begin March 4. (Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE JOURNALS OF MIHAIL SEBASTIAN
Stephen Kunken stars in a play about the life and times of the Romanian novelist and playwright, adapted by David Auburn ("Proof") from the diaries Sebastian wrote during the Second World War. A Keen Company production. Directed by Carl Forsman. Previews begin March 6. (Theatre at 45th Street, 354 W. 45th St. 212-868-4444.)

KING LEAR
Christopher Plummer is Lear in a Lincoln Center Theatre production, directed by Jonathan Miller. In previews. Opens March 4 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont. 212-239-6200.)

MINT THEATRE COMPANY
The Mint stages two pre-Pooh plays by Alan Alexander (better known as A. A.) Milne: "The Truth About Blayds," a drama about a controlling patriarch, and "Mr. Pim Passes By," a comedy in the spirit of Wodehouse. Directed by Jonathan Bank. In previews. (311 W. 43rd St. 212-315-0231.)

OPEN HEART
Robby Benson ("Ice Castles") wrote the book, score, and lyrics for this new musical comedy about open-heart surgery, in which he also stars. He has undergone the procedure twice. Directed by Matt Williams. Previews begin March 4. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 212-239-6200.)

SILENT LAUGHTER
A slapstick farce inspired by silent movies, performed by a cast of ten and accompanied by moviehouse organ music, written by Billy Van Zandt and Jane Milmore. Van Zandt also directs. Previews begin March 8. (Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.)

SMALL TRAGEDY
In a new play by Craig Lucas ("Prelude to a Kiss"), presented by Playwrights Horizons, a small-town production of Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex" is undermined by infighting and intrigue among the cast. Directed by Mark Wing-Davey. In previews. (416 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200.)

TWENTIETH CENTURY
Alec Baldwin and Anne Heche lead the cast in the Roundabout Theatre's revival of Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur's comedy about a man who transforms a chorus girl into a leading lady. Directed by Walter Bobbie. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 212-719-1300.)

YEARDLEY SMITH: MORE
Smith, the actress who provides the voice of Lisa on "The Simpsons," has written an autobiographical solo play, in which she stars. Directed by Judith Ivey. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 212-307-7171.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BEAUTIFUL CHILD
Nicky Silver's first new play in four years centers on a thirty-something art teacher who has painfully puerile ideas about love. After a compromising entanglement with a very young student, he begs his complicated Wasp parents—his lecherous father (the stately George Grizzard) and his acid-tongued mother (Penny Fuller)—to take him in. The script is clever, with a dark finish. Directed by Terry Kinney. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303. Through March 28.)

BIG BILL
A. R. Gurney's new play tracks the rise and fall of Bill Tilden, the tennis superstar who won seven U.S. championships in the nineteen-twenties. John Michael Higgins plays Tilden. Directed by Mark Lamos. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 212-239-6200.)

BRIDGE & TUNNEL
A one-woman show by Sarah Jones, in which she plays twelve immigrants in a poetry slam in Queens and its Pakistani m.c. (Reviewed in this issue.) (45 Bleecker Street Theatre, at 45 Bleecker St. 212-307-4100.)

BUG
Shannon Cochran and Michael Shannon star in a new play by Tracy Letts ("Killer Joe"), set in a hotel in Oklahoma City. Directed by Dexter Bullard. (Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St., at Seventh Ave. 212-239-6200.)

DOUBLE INFIDELITY
Marivaux's romantic farce about a country girl, a commoner, a prince, and a palace beauty is staged at the Pearl. Directed by Beatrice Terry. (80 St. Marks Pl. 212-598-9802.)

DROWNING CROW
Regina Taylor's adaptation of Chekhov's "The Seagull," notionally reset in the Gullah Islands of South Carolina, is a bewildering, inert mess. Directed by Marion McClinton. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/1/04.) (Biltmore, 261 W. 47th St. 212-239-6200.)

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF
Alfred Molina is Tevye, Randy Graff is Golde, and Barbara Barrie is Yente in a new Broadway production of the musical, directed by David Leveaux. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Minskoff, 200 W. 45th St. 212-307-4100.)

MAGIC HANDS FREDDY
Michael Rispoli (Jackie Aprile in "The Sopranos") plays Freddy, a blue-collar masseur with a South Philly accent, and Ralph Macchio ("The Karate Kid") plays his little brother Calvin, an art historian who gets dewy-eyed over Rubens. Written by Arje Shaw. Directed by Rebecca Taylor. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 212-239-6200.)

THE MOONLIGHT ROOM
Tristine Skyler's critically lauded play, about two teen-agers at a hospital who are waiting for news about a friend who has overdosed, has reopened on Theatre Row. Directed by Jeff Cohen. (Beckett, 242 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

THE ORWELL PROJECT
Two productions based on books by George Orwell: Peter Hall's vaudevillian musical adaptation of "Animal Farm," directed by David Travis, and Alan Lyddiard's video-driven version of "1984,"

TABLES FOR TWO

DINERBAR
1569 Lexington Ave., between 100th and 101st Sts. (212-348-0200)—A young pioneer who moved uptown from SoHo to Carnegie Hill a few years ago dubbed the neighborhood—defensively, hopefully, facetiously—the "New Bohemia," or NuBoHo, in an attempt to promote it to skeptical friends. The name, not to mention the sentiment, failed to catch on, and those who pined for NuBoHo were forced to look further north. Dinerbar sits atop a doozy of a hill in what real-estate brokers call Carnegie Hill North—Spanish Harlem, to the rest of the world. The place is spare, roomy, and unassuming: plate glass, ceramic tile, exposed brick, something junky on a big TV, secondhand tabloids by the door. One corner is occasionally taken over by a band or a d.j. There are well-chosen wines and dozens of beers, but no hard liquor, owing to the presence, across the street, of a Life Changers church. The kitchen is open for all to see, and people from the neighborhood drift in and out, in a college-town kind of way. The conversations often seem to be about what happened at Dinerbar the night before.

What comes out of that kitchen, in giant but prettified portions on big rectangular plates, is diner food, comfort food, square-meal food. (Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are represented, Dinerbar being a 24/7 operation.) There is a list of special sandwich combos named after the people who work there. The most popular, according to a waitress named Colleen, is the Colleen: a grilled-chicken hero with mozzarella, tomato, pesto, and red onion. Another waitress, Leilani, prefers the Big Dan, a chicken club with avocado and bacon on seven-grain toast—which is not to be confused with the Dan, "a cheesesteak with cheese, chili, and bacon." The cuisine part of the program is only a bit more buttoned up. A whole striped bass, with a coconut-curry sauce and stir-fried veggies—"Would you like the head and tail?"—is worth the work, but there is plenty of great lazy eating: meat loaf, mashed potatoes, apple brown betty. About the pan-seared salmon filet with mango salsa, one diner exclaimed, "This is better than the salmon I had the other day at the Four Seasons." She paused. "Oops. Shouldn't have said that!" (Open daily for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Entrées $7-$18).

—Nick Paumgarten

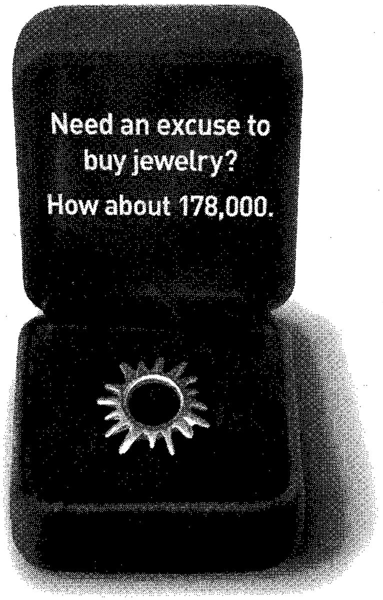
---

directed by Ginevra Bull, which features electric performances by Chris Campbell and Clayton Dean Smith as the lovers who conspire against the Thought Police. (Connelly Theatre, 220 E. 4th St. 212-868-4444. Closes March 14.)

POOR THEATER
The Wooster Group performs a work in progress. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 212-966-3651.)

ROULETTE
A shrewdly written drama of familial dysfunction by the Hollywood screenwriter Paul Weitz. In the play's most compelling moment, the paterfamilias (Larry Bryggman) starts his day with a game of Russian roulette at the breakfast table. Then he goes to work. The disconnected characters revolve around one another like planets whose orbits never intersect. But in Weitz's sendup of suburbia, even suicide can be fun. Directed by Trip Cullman. (3/1/04) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.)

SEA OF TRANQUILITY
A new play by Howard Korder ("Boys' Life") is a kind of "La Ronde" of betrayal, although what passes between the characters is not sex but therapy. Santo Loquasto's revolving set moves from a Santa Fe living room to a counselor's office to a prison cell. The gifted cast includes Dylan Baker as an emotionally stifled counselor and Todd Weeks



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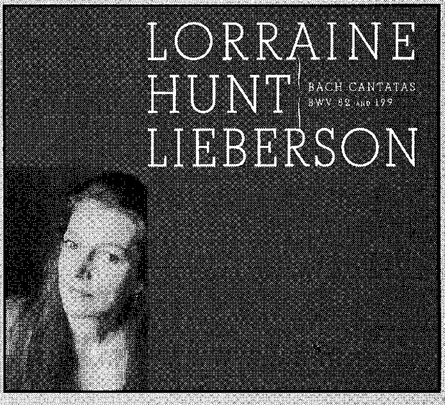
Los Angeles Times



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as his self-centered, irritating brother-in-law, an unemployed Hollywood sitcom writer who has descended upon his sister's place in New Mexico. Directed by Neil Pepe. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 212-239-6200.)

THE STENDHAL SYNDROME
In Terrence McNally's twin bill at Primary Stages, the playwright displays his narrative skill, his sense of fun, his love of music, and his ability to turn a threadbare theatrical trope into a surprising, complex gesture. A tour guide and her clients contemplate Michelangelo's "David" in "Full Frontal Nudity," the first of two one-acts, and succumb to a state of aesthetic surrender that characterizes the evening's eponymous syndrome. The second play, "Prelude and Liebestod," places the audience in a concert hall, at the feet of a preening, histrionic conductor (Richard Thomas), who whips the musicians and himself into a crescendo of wild-eyed Wagnerian passion, as his wife (Isabella Rossellini) and an infatuated male fan (Yul Vasquez) stare down on him from box seats on opposite sides of the auditorium. In the last measures of the "Liebestod," the conductor drives his baton into his abdomen. As comic epiphanies go, McNally's marriage of ecstasy and extinction has a delightfully perverse logic. (3/1/04) (59E59 Theatre, 59 E. 59th St. 212-279-4200.)

VALHALLA
Paul Rudnick's comic drama juxtaposes the lives of King Ludwig II of Bavaria (the charismatic Peter Frechette), who neglects his royal duties to indulge his passions for opera, sex, and architecture, and James Avery (Sean Dugan), a teen-ager in Texas in the nineteen-forties who would rather go to bed with his friend Henry Lee Stafford (Scott Barrow) than play football or get married. The two characters pursue their fantasies exuberantly in the first act, then run afoul of the dark forces of convention in the second. Directed by Christopher Ashley. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 212-239-6200.)

WINTERTIME
Marsha Mason stars in a Second Stage production of a new romantic comedy by Charles L. Mee. Directed by David Schweizer. (307 W. 43rd St. 212-246-4422.)

ALSO PLAYING

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 212-307-4747.

AUNT DAN AND LEMON
Clurman, 410 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

AVENUE Q
Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

THE BOY FROM OZ
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF
Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200. (Closes March 14.)

CHICAGO
Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 212-239-6200.

GOLDA'S BALCONY
Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

GOLF: THE MUSICAL
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200.

GYPSY
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

HAIRSPRAY
Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 212-307-4100.

I AM MY OWN WIFE
Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.

KING COWBOY RUFUS RULES THE UNIVERSE!
St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-533-4650.

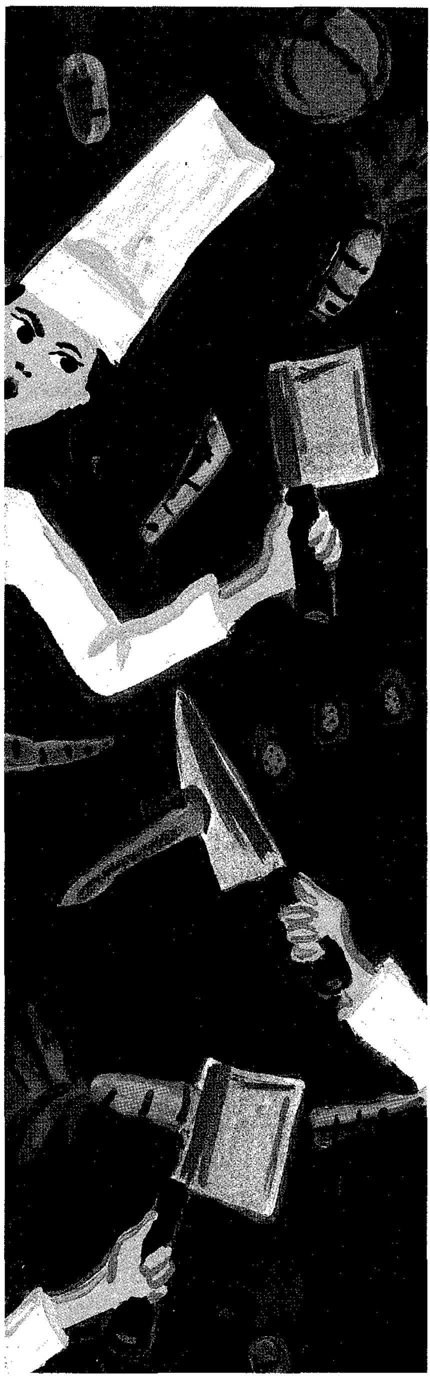
LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 212-239-6200.

MAMMA MIA!
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 212-563-5544.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 212-239-6200.

WICKED
Gershwin, 222 W. 51st St. 212-307-4100.

WONDERFUL TOWN
Al Hirschfeld, 302 W. 45th St. 212-239-6200.



"Cookin'" opens at the Minetta Lane.

DANCE

NEDERLANDS DANS THEATER
This is one of the sleekest companies in Europe, thanks to Jiří Kylián, who was its director from 1978 to 1999. Anders Hellström took over in January of this year, but the company remains faithful to Kylián in its first season at BAM in a decade. Program A, on the first two nights, consists of the recent Kylián ballets "Claude Pascal," "Last Touch," and "27'52"," which combine surgically precise movements with wide-ranging existential literary allusions. Program B, which will be performed next week, is more eclectic. (BAM's Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4129. Program A: March 9 at 7:30. Through March 14.)

PAUL TAYLOR DANCE COMPANY
In his autobiography, Taylor traces the genesis of his dance "Last Look" to childhood games with marionettes. This season, he presents a work more clearly related to that early experience: "Le Grand Puppetier," which uses Stravinsky's score for "Petrushka" with a new libretto. A sorcerer tries to force his reluctant daughter to marry a limp-wristed (literally) courtier; a rebellion incited by the sorcerer's puppet brings about a comic ending, with everyone paired off happily, but a last-second reversal suggests that Taylor's sympathies lie with the man who pulls the strings. The season includes the New York première of "In the Beginning" (set in the Garden of Eden) and the haunting, tender repertory piece "Sunset," from 1983. ♦ March 3 at 8, March 6 at 8, March 7 at 2 and 6:30, and March 9 at 7: "Airs," "In the Beginning," and "Piazzolla Caldera." ♦ March 4 at 8 and March 6 at 2: "Runes," "Le Grand Puppetier," and "Mercuric Tidings." ♦ March 5 at 8 and March 7 at 2: "Sunset," "Dreamgirls," and "Promethean Fire." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212. Through March 14.)

NICHOLASLEICHTERDANCE
Leichter, whose solo works tend to be stronger than his group choreography, offers two ensemble pieces for his company as part of the 92nd Street Y's Harkness Dance Project. "Never End" approaches the songs of Aaliyah and the Latin grooves of Alfredo Hidrovo abstractly. "Skin Diving" is more straightforward. Set to recordings by D'Angelo and Thievery Corporation and an original score by the cellist Chris Lancaster, it gleefully pokes holes in stereotypes about movement and ethnicity. (The Duke on 42nd Street, 229 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. March 3-4 at 8, March 6 at 8, and March 7 at 2 and 7.)

ARMITAGE GONE! DANCE
Karole Armitage has been working abroad for years, directing MaggioDanza in Florence and making ballets for European companies. She returns to New York with a multifaceted piece that shows off the technique of her dancers, who excel at intricate, strenuous partnering. Contrary to its stiff title, "Time Is the Echo of an Axe Within a Wood" (from a Larkin poem), the work is fluid, incorporating popular dance forms. In the program's first half, dancers slide through a curtain of lights and reflective beads (made by David Salle), accompanied by Bartók's plucked string music and Gavin Bryars's shimmering chimes. The second half features two voguers and an expert in bharata natyam. The company includes the excellent Megumi Eda, a paper-thin, catlike Japanese dancer, and Theresa Ruth Howard, an Amazon from Philadelphia. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. March 3-5 at 8, March 6 at 2 and 8, and March 7 at 2 and 7:30.)

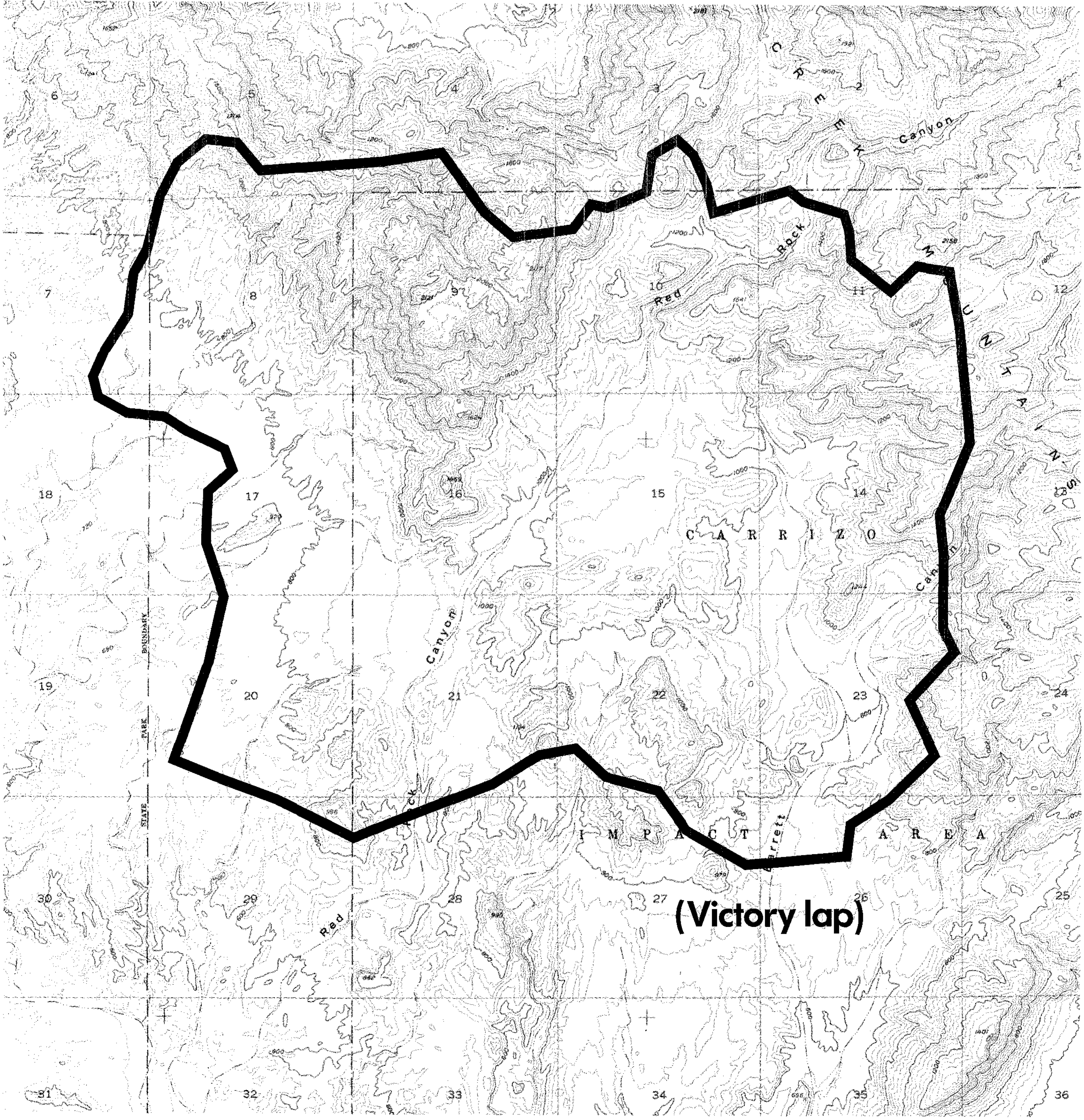
DANSPACE PROJECT
The "City/Dans" series continues with Anita Cheng's "Open Order," which blends dance, new music, and video art. (St. Mark's In-the-Bowery, Second Ave. at 10th St. 212-674-8194. March 4-7 at 8:30.)

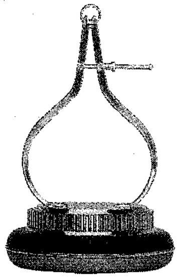
"CINDERELLA"
New York Theatre Ballet's family-friendly production, choreographed by Donald Mahler. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 212-355-6160. March 6-7 at 11 A.M., 1, and 3:30.)

"IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS TODAY"
Montreal's Cas Public company comes to the New Victory with a suite of six tableaux about childhood fears, intended for both adult and young audiences. Choreographed by Hélène Blackburn. (209 W. 42nd St. 212-239-6200. March 4-5 at 7, March 6 at 2 and 7, and March 7 at noon and 5.)

DANCE THEATRE WORKSHOP
Karl Anderson and Kate Weare, two choreographers who have a pleasingly compact and direct manner of expression, share a program titled "A Picture and a Thousand Words" as part of the "Carnival" series. "Intercourse," a duet that they developed together, describes a partnership of give and take: when Weare unexpectedly slaps her hand on Anderson's belly or explodes in a flurry of kicks, he holds his stance. Other new work includes "Embracing Nothingness," an athletic solo for Anderson; the low-to-the-ground solos "Dirt" and "Dig," danced by Weare; and "Squint to Focus," a trio for women set to an original score by Guy Yarden. Anderson and Weare share the "Carnival" week with "Barcelona in 48 Hours," a multimedia dance-and-film work by David Zambrano, Anja Hitzenberger, and Edward Ratliff. (219 W. 19th St. 212-924-0077. "A Picture and a Thousand Words": March 3-4 at 7. "Barcelona in 48 Hours": March 5-6 at 7. Through March 13.)

ELIZA GRAN


CREEK
Canyon
MOUNTAINS
Red Rock
CARRIZO
Canyon
IMPACT AREA
STATE PARK BOUNDARY
(Victory lap)



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LES BALLETS AFRICAINS
For fifty years, the institution also known as the National Ensemble of the Republic of Guinea has packaged African history and traditions in knockout spectacles. In this golden-anniversary production, the company acquits itself with charm and stamina in multiple scenarios: an evil colonial governor incites revolution, elders decide to outlaw genital mutilation, and young boys take liberties with virgins and then must face the Ancestral Guardian. In the end, everyone joins together in a dance against poverty and injustice. (Whitman Theatre, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 718-951-4500. March 6 at 8.)

PEGGY SPINA TAP: "IDIOSYNCRASY"
One of the biggest challenges for a tap-dance company is finding venues that will let you scuff up the floor. Spina avoids the problem by holding performances in the SoHo loft where she's lived and taught for decades. The intimate space is the ideal theatre for the unamplified interaction between her young, eager company of dancers and the swinging band led by her longtime accompanist, Joel Forrester. (Spina Loft, 115 Prince St. 212-674-8885. March 5 at 8 and March 6 at 6 and 8:30.)

DANCENOW/NYC
The newest installment of the Joe's Pub series "Treats, Treasures, Little Pleasures Cabaret" includes dances by Claire Byrne, Pat Catterson, Keely Garfield, Sean Curran, Jeanine Durning, and many others. Curran is the host on March 5 and David Neumann presides on March 6. (425 Lafayette St. 212-239-6200. March 5-6 at 7.)

NIGHT LIFE CONCERTS

LUDACRIS
The Atlanta radio d.j. turned savvy superstar rapper rolls into town with tracks from his latest album, "Chicken N Beer." His St. Louis protégé **Chingy** will be "Right Thurr" with him. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 212-307-7171. March 4 at 8.)

"LIVE FROM THE EAST VILLAGE!"
The Club at La Mama E.T.C. presents a new-music series, starting with performances by the multilingual ensemble Barbez and the Russian dancer Ksenia Vidyaykina (who is also the lead singer in Barbez), along with short films by John Jesurun. (74A E. 4th St. 212-475-7710. March 4-6 at 10.)

HIP JAZZ CONCERT SERIES
The Cuban émigré **Arturo Sandoval** is an athletic trumpeter who regularly transforms excess into a virtue. Sharing the bill are **Los Hombres Calientes**, a propulsive New Orleans-based band. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. March 4 at 8.)

ERYKAH BADU
The chart-topping singer Badu has cornered the market on sex-kitten languor and wacky New Age spirituality. With the English neo-soul duo **Floetry.** (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 212-247-4777. March 5 at 7.)

WORLD MUSIC INSTITUTE
A night of *qawwali* music from Pakistan with Farid Ayaz Qawwal & Brothers. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. For more information, call 212-545-7536. March 6 at 8.)

THE LOST BAYOU RAMBLERS
This group from Lafayette, Louisiana, provides foot-stomping, swinging sets of traditional Cajun music. (La Belle Époque, 827 Broadway, at 13th St. For more information, call 212-685-7597. March 7 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

B. B. KING BLUES CLUB & GRILL
237 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144)—March 4: **CPR.** The classic-rock veteran David Crosby has a son named James Raymond, who was raised by adoptive parents and embraced music—he plays keyboards—without knowing of his biological lineage. The two met in the mid-nineties and formed a folk-rock band with the guitarist Jeff Pevar. March 5: The **Commitments,** a soul ensemble with roots in the 1991 Alan Parker film of the same name (and featuring a smattering of alumni from the original cast). March 8: The contemporary soul singer **Glenn Lewis.**

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111)—March 8: The **Church,** who are best known for the languid and atmospheric 1988 single "Under the Milky Way," have actually been around for more than twenty years. In their native Australia they're a household name, and they have just released their seventeenth album of neo-psychedelic rock, "Forget Yourself." March 9: The Reading, England, band the **Cooper Temple Clause** incorporates a mélange of styles, including electronic dance music, sunny pop, and brazen heavy metal.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (212-777-6800)—March 6: The New Orleans trio **Better Than Ezra,** one of the countless alternative bands of the mid-nineties that scored a major hit only to sink from view, has yet to match the success of its 1995 single "Good."

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (212-539-8777)—March 4: **Dominic Miller,** Sting's longtime guitarist. March 5: **Lúnasa,** an Irish quintet that explores the rhythmic foundations of its national music. The bassist Trevor Hutchinson, a former member of the Waterboys, and the percussive guitarist Donogh Hennessey are the stars in this endeavor. March 7 and Sundays this month the singer-songwriter **Dan Bern** holds court.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (212-219-3055)—March 3: The **Mountain Goats'** John Darnielle made his reputation, and his many albums, with a staunch devotion to low-fidelity recording, most often on a department-store boom box. His frantic strumming of an acoustic guitar and high-pitched delivery of ultra-literate lyrics endeared him to indie-rock fans. Darnielle's new album, "We Shall All Be Healed," should win over everyone else. Recorded in an actual studio and cleanly produced by his friend John Vanderslice, it dresses Darnielle's pointed lyrics in a dark fabric of keyboard, guitar, and violin. With the Chicago-based band **Manischevitz,** which has a penchant for radically changing its sound between records: on its latest album, "City Life," the group dispenses with orchestral arrangements in favor of direct and driving pop. March 4: The Australian singer-songwriter **Paul Kelly** kicks off his first U.S. tour in two years as he promotes his new double album, "Ways & Means." March 4-5: The **Undertones** (see This Week).

NORTHSIX
66 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-5103)—March 6: **Grant-Lee Phillips,** the ex-lead singer of the critically acclaimed (though commercially anemic) band Grant Lee Buffalo, has opted for a more intimate, acoustic sound since going solo. His new album is called "Virginia Creeper."

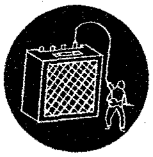
SATALLA
37 W. 26th St. (212-576-1155)—March 4: The Argentine folk ensemble **Los Changos.** March 5: The Scottish gang **Shooglenifty** specializes in neo-Celtic music that mixes tradition, innovation, humor, and enthusiasm, often in unequal measures. They call their genre variously "hypnofolkadelia" and "acid croft."

SIN-É
150 Attorney St. (212-388-0077)—Oakland's **Faun Fables** bring their faintly medieval balladry to town on March 4. The two members—Dawn McCarthy on guitar and otherworldly lead vocals, and Nils Frykdahl, of Sleepytime Gorilla Museum, on everything from autoharp to flute—have a deep musical empathy (as well as the ability to tour cross-country in a flatbed truck). "Family Album," their intensely personal new recording, is an idiosyncratic scrapbook that includes field recordings of Italian schoolchildren and thirty-year-old recordings of McCarthy's mother singing and playing the organ. March 5: **Grant-Lee Phillips** (see Northsix).

SOUTHPAW
125 Fifth Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-230-0236)—March 3: **Faun Fables** (see Sin-é) and Oakland's avant-rockers **Sleepytime Gorilla Museum.** March 9: The local trio **TV on the Radio** became one of the most highly touted bands in independent rock this past fall on the basis of a single EP. The band recently produced a full-length album, "Desperate Youth, Blood Thirsty Babes," which has a solemnity and stateliness that could be called gospel rock. With **CocoRosie.** The two sisters in this group have a high-pitched vocal style, and they favor sparse accompaniment, often just a bit of guitar, and such unlikely instruments as gold-chain belts.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503)—March 6: The guitarists **Vinicius Cantuaria** and **Marc Ribot.**

POP NOTES



RAPPING IT UP
"Slow Jamz," the song that the Chicago hip-hop producer and performer Kanye West recorded with the speed-rapper Twista and the actor Jamie Foxx, is not only one of the most popular singles of the year thus far but also has the most quoted couplet: "She's got a light-skinned friend look like Michael Jackson / Got a dark-skinned friend look like Michael Jackson." (For further study of the use of the identical rhyme in popular music, see Bob Dylan, "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll.") With a distinctive production technique that favors samples from classic soul records (often sped up) and gospel-choir backing vocals, West has already crafted chart-topping singles for artists such as Alicia Keys, Scarface, and Jay-Z; on **"The College Dropout"** (Roc-a-Fella), he steps into the spotlight as a solo artist. Like many contemporary rap albums, "The College Dropout" is somewhat dropsical, with a few too many between-song skits and guest spots from fellow-rappers, but the high points are high indeed. Chief among them is "Through the Wire," which was recorded while West was recovering from a serious car wreck. Rapping through a wired-shut jaw over a sample of Chaka Khan's "Through the Fire," he reflects on both his injury and his rise through the music business with sly humor, convulsive pop-culture allusions—one verse mentions Tom Cruise, Michael Jackson (again), Mase, and the M. Night Shyamalan movie "Unbreakable"—and uncommon candor.

Twista also has a new album out, but **"Kamikaze"** (Atlantic), which includes a slightly different version of "Slow Jamz," is a poor cousin of "The College Dropout." Once upon a time, Twista was Tung Twista, certified by "The Guinness Book of World Records" as the fastest rapper alive. More than a decade later, he has been reupholstered for the new millennium, and while his agility and sheer velocity are still breathtaking, he is in every other regard ordinary. Only a handful of songs, including the ultraviolent "Kill Us All" and the gentle "Sunshine" (which is built on an excellent Bill Withers sample), hold their own. Fast-forward through the rest.

—*Ben Greenman*

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BARBÈS
376 9th St., Park Slope, Brooklyn (718-965-9177)—March 5: Post-boomer jazz guitarists have the unenviable task of finding something to say that Metheney, Scofield, and Frisell haven't already expressed. **Ben Monder,** a noted new-jazz player since the eighties, faces the challenge head on.

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (212-475-8592)—Through March 7: Call them the Sons of Latin

Music. Machito, Jr., Tito Rodriguez, Jr., and Tito Puente, Jr., front the **Big 3 Palladium Orchestra** and carry on the tradition of their influential fathers. Mambo!

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound murals, and, through March 27, **Betty Buckley.**

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121)—Plenty of jazz guitarists have followed in Wes Montgomery's footsteps, but none have been quite as inventive or as funky as he was. **Jimmy Smith,** a master of the jazz organ and a noted recording partner of Montgomery (who died in 1968), leads a tribute, joined by the guitarists **Melvin Sparks** (March 2-3), **Rodney Jones** (March 4-5), and **Larry Coryell** (March 6-7). Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232)—March 4-7: The **George Coleman** quartet. Although he's a New York institution, Coleman is actually from Memphis, Tennessee; he was a part of the nineteen-fifties jazz community that included Booker Little and Phineas Newborn. His tenor saxophone speaks an authentic, harmonically complex dialect that mates Southern grit with bebop finesse. He put in some accomplished but strangely undervalued work with Max Roach and Miles Davis before branching out on his own some three decades ago, and he remains a vital link to a time when jazz giants still strode the earth.

SWEET RHYTHM
88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (212-255-3626)—March 5-6: The **Vijay Iyer** quartet. The pianist Iyer layers his taut compositions with improvisational abandon. He and his saxophonist **Rudresh Mahanthappa** are ambitious players.

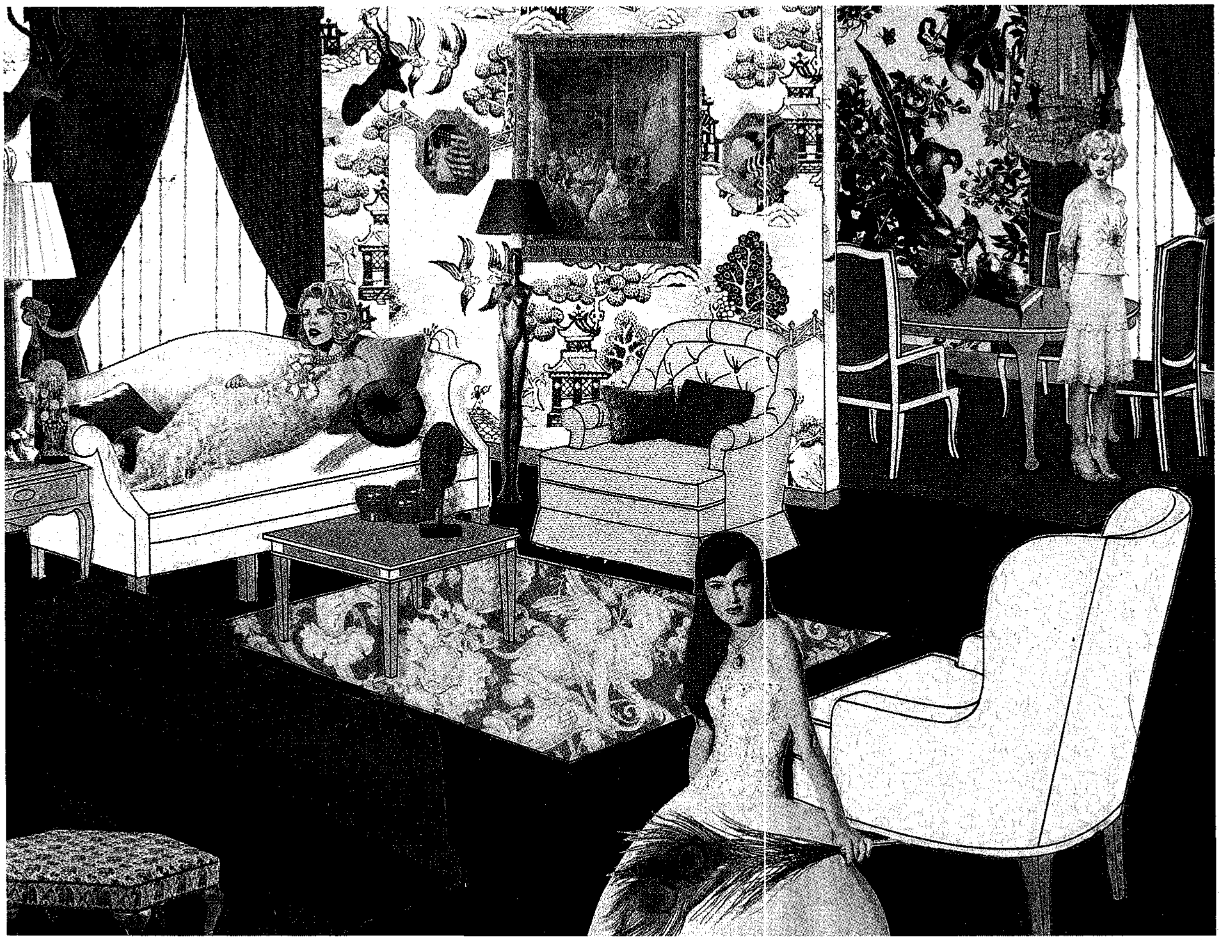
VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (212-255-4037)—The fluent pianist **Eric Reed** is a Wynton Marsalis associate who has stepped out of his former employer's shadow. He's here through March 7 with his quintet, paying tribute to Fats Waller. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART
MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

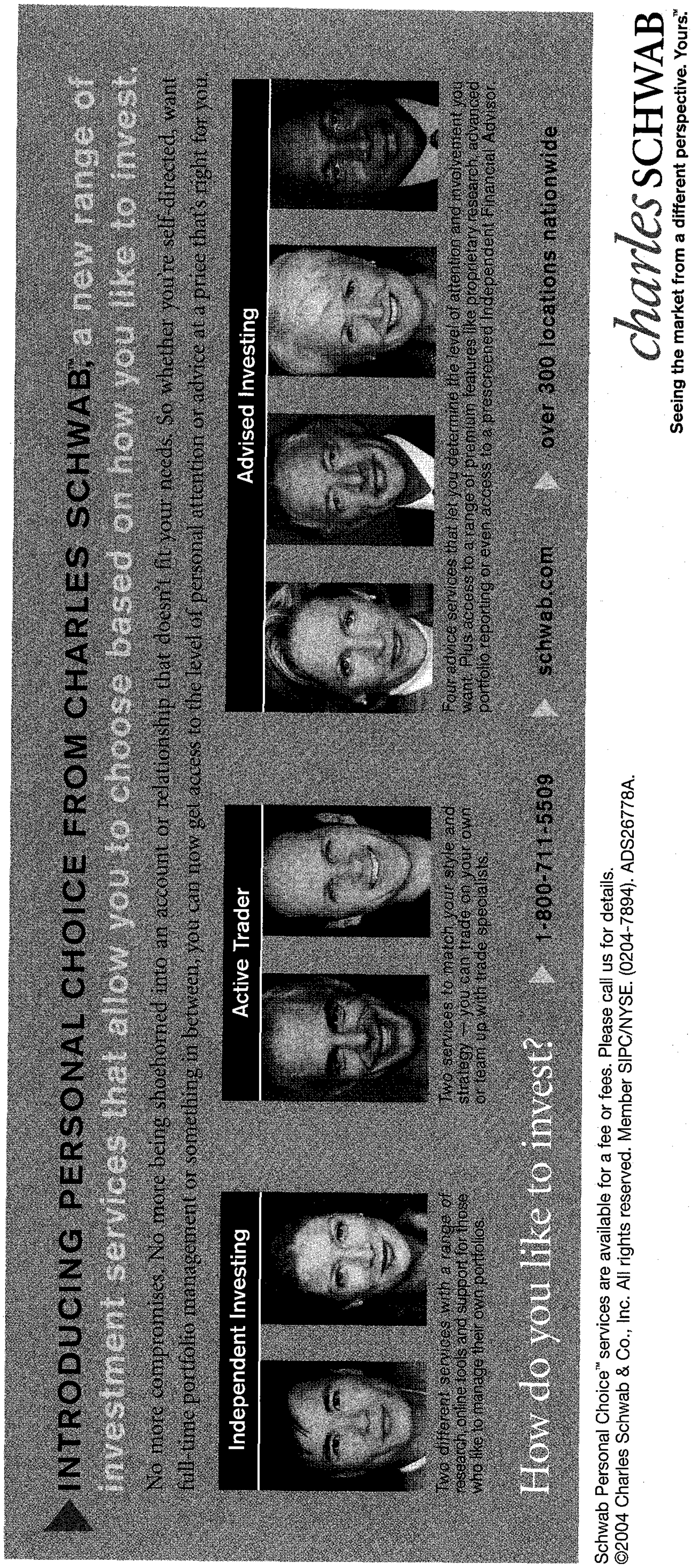
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-879-5500)—The name Chuck Close instantly conjures images of giant gridded portraits, tight and deadpan in Photo-Realist black-and-white in the seventies, with more recent versions dissolving in loose lozenges of color. **"Chuck Close Prints: Process and Collaboration"** shows that all the portraiture of self and others went along with constant experiments in the practice of printmaking. Etching, silk screen, linoleum and woodblock prints, and hand-constructed pulp-paper multiples are tracked through various proof states, and actual woodblocks, etched copper panels, and other studio paraphernalia also appear. Through April 18. ♦ Terra-cotta models were sculptors' preparatory sketches, clay versions of what would later be carved from stone. More than a hundred of them, some fired, some unfired, are on view in **"Playing with Fire: European Terracotta Models, 1740-1840,"** including diminutive works by Flaxman, Houdon, and Clodion. The eighteenth-century art star Antonio Canova's models—he called them *invenzioni*—are among the roughest and most spontaneous. His "Penitent Magdalen" and "Lamentation Over the Dead Abel" show what his sublime marbles never could: the hand of the artist and the heat of inspiration, captured forever in hasty tool marks and globs of modelled clay. The preponderance of Venuses, Cupids, and Ariadnes should come as no surprise, since the golden age of neoclassicism falls in the middle of this period. Through April 25. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City (212-708-9400)—**"Kiki Smith: Prints, Books & Things"** shows off a compendium of the artist's favored images: eyes, breasts, birds, babies, cats, Little Red Riding Hood, and the starry sky. Although she's primarily a sculptor, this retrospective of works on paper and fabric makes it clear that her three-dimensional thinking is deeply influenced by the etchings, artist's books, and even Xeroxes collected here. The range of works is impressive, from Smith's first experiments with silk screen in the eighties to the beautiful "Blue Feet," a series of drypoints and etchings made last year, and they reveal a side of her that's quick, funny, luscious, and fragile. Through March 8. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (212-423-3500)—Umberto Boccioni joined the Milanese Futurists in 1909, but it was not until 1911, after a trip to Paris, that his festive genre and figure studies—especially portraits of his formidable, white-haired mother, his favorite subject—evolved into the dynamic "force-lines" of Futurism. **"Boccioni's Materia: A Futurist Masterpiece and the Avant-Garde in Milan and Paris"** examines the transformations of these crucial years, culminating in the creation of the huge portrait of his mother as a modern saint. Along the way, the show examines works by Picasso, Braque, Duchamp, and Medardo Rosso, with Boccioni's own famous bronze "Unique Forms of Continuity in Space" thrown in as a glowing footnote. Through May 9. (Open Saturdays through Wednesdays, 10 to 5:45, and Fridays, 10 to 8.)



Laurie Simmons's photographs of collages inspired by a 1976 interior-design workbook, at Sperone Westwater.



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WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (212-570-3676)— Selections from the permanent collection are on view on the fifth floor; the rest of the museum reopens on March 11 for the Biennial. (Open Wednesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6, and Fridays, 1 to 9.)

COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 91st St. (212-849-8300)—**"Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser."** Examples of the Victorian-era designer's mass-produced housewares (see This Week). Opens March 5. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10 to 5; Fridays, 10 to 9; Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

P.S. 1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTER
22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084)—You are what you eat—or drive or wear. So how about the art you buy? All the work in Bob Nickas's diaristic **"Collection (or, How I Spent a Year)"** was purchased by him personally in the past year. What does a curator's budget afford? Lots of collages and works by quirky up-and-comers like Tim Lokiec (represented by a collage drawing); Ara Peterson's "Ultra Violence," a video montage of movie gore; Jules de Balincourt's U.S. map reconfigured to include other countries; and oddball works by standbys like Louise Lawler, whose photograph of a mouse clinging to a tightrope should raise a few neck hairs. Through May 1. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

TOM BURCKHARDT
Something funny is going on in Burckhardt's landscapes, and it is both ha-ha and peculiar. Dreamlike watercolor scenes of plaid hilltops, striped lava lakes, and kilim-patterned plains are populated by little men in Tyvek suits—clipped from industry-specific catalogues and collaged in—who trundle barrels of toxic waste across the psychedelic terrain. One title says it all: "Haz Mat Shan" mixes the shorthand for hazardous materials with the Chinese term for mountain, as if the spare, meditative spaces of brush-painted scrolls had been invaded by bioterror squads. Through March 13. (De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 212-262-5050.)

BILL JENSEN
Jensen's black-and-white "Drunken Brush" paintings mix Asian calligraphy with Western Abstract Expressionism. The works range from meditative meanderings inspired by sumi ink drawings to aggressively worked pieces in the spirit of de Kooning. The colorful "Duo Duo" series pays homage to the terrestrial hues of Tuscany, where Jensen spends his summers. Lozenges of yellow against warm-hued grounds, tempera as crusty as the surface of an old fresco, and calligraphic lines inspired by Brice Marden make them the visual equivalent of an earthy Chianti. Through March 13. (Danese, 41 E. 57th St. 212-223-2227.)

JUAN MUÑOZ
Muñoz developed a signature vocabulary of theatrical components—vertiginous balconies, banisters without stairs, gnomish figures mutely importuning—each illustrated in this small show of works made between 1985 and 1997. A rubber-headed, sack-bodied doll moves its lips with the help of a concealed motor; another hangs from its teeth in a display of gymnastic prowess that looks suspiciously like suicide. Muñoz has a wonderful feel for his chosen leathers, metals, woods, and resins, but the grim message is that, while everyone is communicating, no one looks or listens. Through March 27. (Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. 212-517-8677.)

"THEY STILL DRAW PICTURES: CHILDREN'S ART IN WARTIME FROM THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR TO KOSOVO"
Most of the images here were produced by displaced Spanish children in the thirties; the rest come from

Burma, Croatia, Poland, and a dozen other hot spots. What's astonishing is how consistent the artists are. For decades, children have drawn crumpled buildings and columns of smoke and bloodied figures in much the same way; airplanes and helicopters are always rendered with the obsessive care children reserve for machinery. The text they added to many of the drawings is especially moving. Through April 3. (AXA, 787 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. 212-554-4818.)

GALLERIES-CHELSEA

SLATER BRADLEY
A video and photographs celebrate the cult of Kurt Cobain, who killed himself ten years ago this April. Bradley, twenty-nine years old and something of a cult hero himself, is a seasoned channeler of adolescent despair. Here he perpetrates what might be called a true hoax: a convincing video of a performance by Nirvana—a "lost tape" with mythic status among Cobain fans—with lip-synching and air guitar by friends of Bradley. Cobain is played by Ben Brock, who also poses in character for the show's photographs. The effect is a sensational, cold excitement, haunted by death in a thoroughly lively way. Through March 27. (Team, 527 W. 26th St. 212-279-9219.)

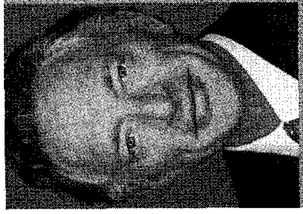
JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER
Cardiff and Miller use surround sound to get their effects. Echoing footsteps and an eerie piano accompany nocturnal images of a pedestrian tunnel and a vacant apartment in "The Berlin Files." The soundtrack to the diorama "Cabin Fever," which one views while wearing headphones, is full of stock audio cues—creaking doors, angry voices, a gun shot—that suggest a violent crime. Jimi Hendrix's famous version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" wails through the gallery when visitors step on a pedal attached to a Marshall amp. Through March 20. (Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 212-206-9100.)

ANYA GALLACCIO / DOUG AND MIKE STARN
The charming Gallaccio, a sweet contemporary of the sour Young British Artists, continues to mix up nature and artifice, with cast-bronze, silver-berried branches; a gilded bronze potato plant; actual gerbera daisies smushed and decaying between panes of glass set in antique doors; and draped fishnets made of gold lamé. The results are opulent, frail, and poetic. New works by the Starn twins, who are known for melodramatic effects in vast, grainy photographs, explore the moth's pretty and sinister aspects in various formats, including sleek C-prints mounted on aluminum. Through March 20. (Lehmann Maupin, 540 W. 26th St. 212-255-2923.)

MARTIN MULL
Handsome, collage-style, oil-on-linen paintings that draw on photographs, wallpaper swatches, and scenes of postwar American suburban life. In "Silverdale II," a woman stands stiffly next to a pile of children's toys, the house behind her blurred as though it were speeding away; the couple in "Real Estate" gaze confidently into the future (which has taken the form of a sun-drenched two-story house), while the big, cartoony heads of two little girls watch from the sky. The psychological core of the show may well be "Evidence," a gray image of a small, tidy house inset with a darker gray oval in which a man scurries like a panicked rabbit. Through March 20. (Spike, 547 W. 20th St. 212-627-4100.)

KATE SHEPHERD
Slick enamel paintings that blur the lines between architecture and abstraction. Shepherd's earlier perspectival studies have given way to panels that describe space in the sparest terms: a few outlines and yards of impeccably hip, flat color. "Celadon, Herringbone, Sang de Boeuf" yields a patterned light-green floor and a blood-red wall, while "Gem-Tiled Wall (Wine), Mint Floor" reverses the formula. Through March 20. (Lelong, 528 W. 26th St. 212-315-0470.)

LAURIE SIMMONS
Home decoration goes haywire in these photographs of collages inspired by Frances Joslin Gold's



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1976 do-it-yourself interior-design workbook, "The Instant Decorator." Perspective and proportions are skewed; tacky objets d'art teeter precariously on their perches; ladies clipped from postwar bra ads have invaded a bedroom, while a motley crew of bachelors lurks in the den. Fantasy decoration schemes collide with real life in "Black and White Living Room," which includes a painting by Simmons's husband, Carroll Dunham. Through March 27. (Sperone Westwater, 415 W. 13th St. 212-999-7337.)

GROUP SHOW
A handsome, chewy collection of new works. Photographs by Max Becher and Andrea Robbins document the cross-cultural exchange of European colonial styles and American commercial blight. Candice Breitz pairs color video clips of Hollywood actresses acting (Cameron Diaz, Meg Ryan, et al.) with black-and-white versions in which she does her level best to imitate them; the effect is a surprisingly tangy deconstruction of star power. It's not entirely clear what Haim Steinbach is up to with his elegant shelved sets of odd objects—one conjoins a pile of wine corks and a pair of soiled shoe inserts—but they are satisfying in an umbrella-and-sewing-machine kind of way. Through March 20. (Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. 212-627-1018.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"TREASURE MAPS"
Images created by people who aren't visual artists. The mathematics professor Tim R. Riley's research in geometric group theory is represented by black-and-white diagrams projected on a wall, while the investigations into cell communication by the molecular biophysicist and biochemist Vinzenz Unger have yielded a pretty, if incomprehensible, video. Other pieces include Elizabeth Streb's idiosyncratic dance notations, Earle Brown's musical scores, and Chitra Ganesh's traditional Indian floor drawings in rice flour. Through March 13. (Apex, 291 Church St. 212-431-5270.)

GALLERIES—BROOKLYN

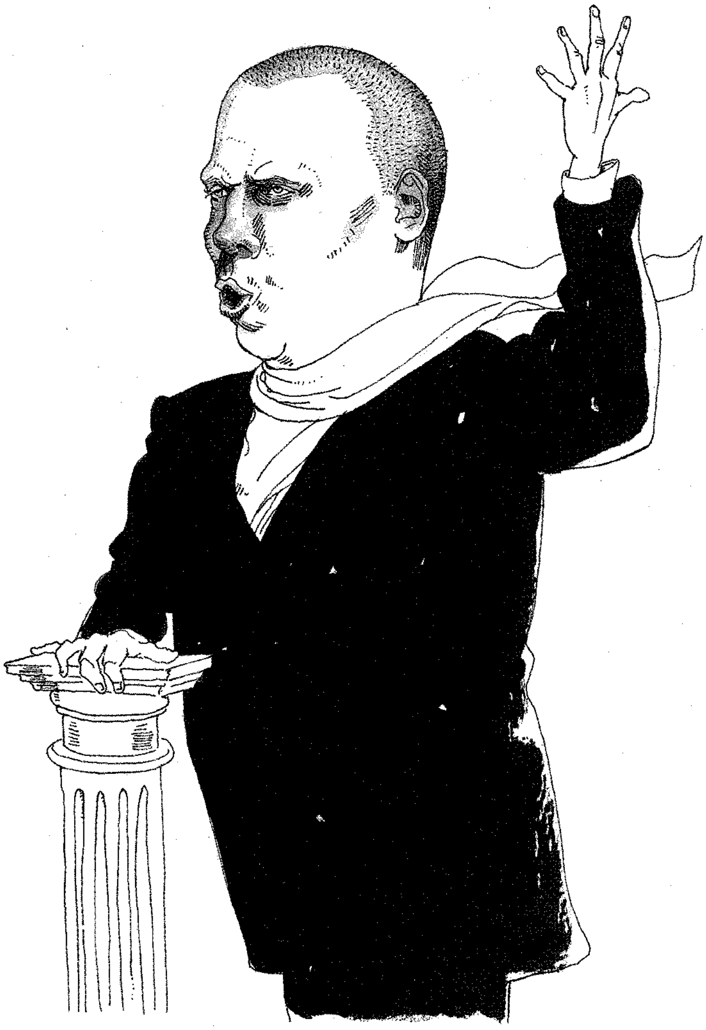
KIM JONES
For the past twenty years, Jones has presented himself as the Mudman, an urban shaman bedaubed with dirt who as often as not performed in the subway. He's still pondering questions of masking and exorcism here, with these wall-mounted sculptures—lumps of scatological mixed media in which bits of children's toys are sunk—and inked-over photographs of Playboy Bunnies, ballplayers, and himself. Violence is a pervasive theme. A wall map traces a made-up war, complete with storage dumps, troop movements, and shifting battle lines. Through March 15. (Pierogi, 177 N. 9th St. 718-599-2144.)

SAMUEL ROUSSEAU
The gallery space has been turned into a tech-happy fun house, with quivering video-projected wallpaper and a flashing stained-glass fireplace. LCD screens behind framed needlepoint pictures make the eyes in a young girl's stitched portrait dart frantically, and a little house in a wooded valley crackles with flames. In the "bathroom," a tiny man down a shower drain doesn't seem to notice that people are peering at him, and the scale has a laugh track. Through March 14. (Parker's Box, 193 Grand St. 718-388-2882.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

DAVID HILLIARD
It's impossible not to contrive some sort of narrative for Hilliard's multi-panelled photographs of young people. In one, a young man—sharply angular, his gaze watchful and secretive—stares at the viewer from under the eaves of a fairground booth. He seems about to speak. Through March 20. (Yancey Richardson, 535 W. 22nd St. 646-230-9610.)

BILL HENSON
Henson's elegant, formal photographs—of battered landscapes and fragile, wispy youths—resemble nothing so much as Flemish still-lifes; rarely has color photography captured so profoundly the furry texture of nighttime. In one image, a girl's skin takes on the iridescence of insect wings against a water-dark background. In another, perhaps the most intimate picture in the show, a young woman clad in a bluish shift seems to float over a glittering smear of lights, her arm listing by her side. Through March 13. (Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 212-366-4774.)



Matthias Goerne sings lieder at Carnegie Hall on March 7.

JOE CIARDIELLO

RAY K. METZKER
Black-and-white photographs taken at the beach in Atlantic City in the late nineteen-sixties and seventies by a photographer who studied with Harry Callahan and Aaron Siskind. All the pictures are self-consciously formal, but the most surprising ones are in a series of eight taken under the boardwalk. People carrying towels and beach chairs walk along a dark corridor lit by geometrically severe slashes of light coming through the wooden slats above them. Through March 20. (Laurence Miller, 20 W. 57th St. 212-397-3930.)

JEM SOUTHAM
Southam makes landscapes with a conceptual conceit. Three pairs of pictures taken in the British countryside—of a farmer's field, a seaside cliff, and a river estuary—show the same site at different times. A small, circular dew pond appears in the field; lichen grows on fallen boulders; the place where the river meets the sea is contorted. A poignant series of seven photographs documents a small rural property over a period of five years, as it shifts from brambly country house to graded, muddy field. Through March 20. (Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. 212-989-7600.)

"IDENTITY"
The three artists in this ambitious show address questions of identity—racial, cultural, and gender—but there's a great deal of playfulness on display here also. Annu Palakunnathu Matthew's sepia-toned diptychs present the artist—an Indian-American—next to a nineteenth-century photograph of American Indians. Sunil Gupta, an Indian living in London, makes wistful diptychs, pairing, for example, a portrait of his averted face with a photograph of a sad-eyed cow standing in a field. It's a graceful evocation of loneliness. The Japanese artist Tomoko Sawada's irrepressible self-portraits as various brides-to-be (the photographs are meant to resemble the photos young women send to prospective grooms through matchmakers) are pure, unfettered fun. Through March 20. (Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 212-645-9444.)

Short List

DIANE ARBUS
Grey, 100 Washington Sq. E. 212-998-6780. Through March 27.

JEAN MORAL
Gitterman, 170 E. 75th St. 212-734-0868. Through April 10.

KATHY SUDER
Bruce Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. 212-627-3930. Through March 13.

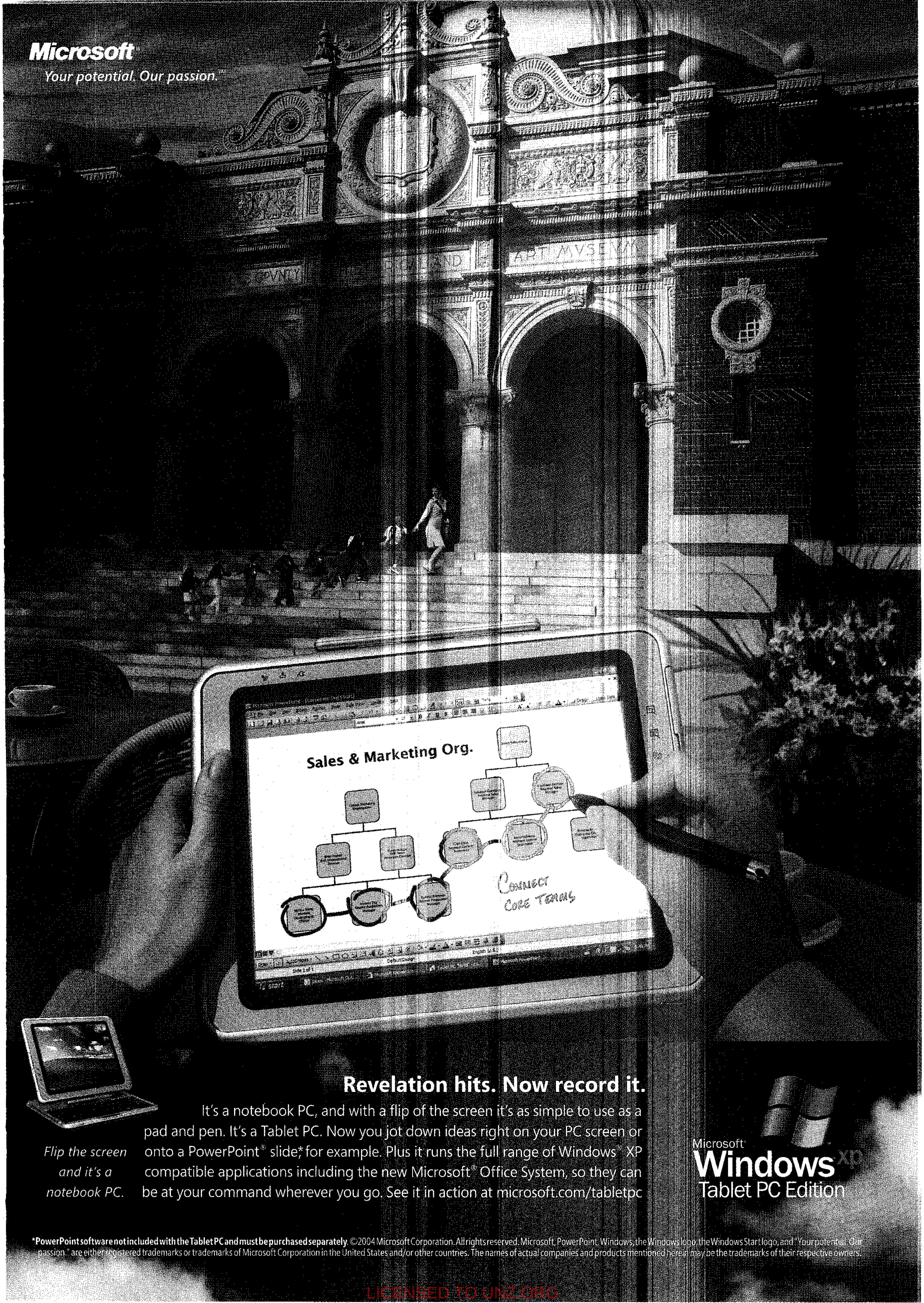
AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S
March 9 at 2 and March 10 at 10 A.M. and 2: When Robert Koch, the late collector and curator, gazed upon the glasswork of Louis Comfort Tiffany, he saw not just beautiful trifles but an aesthetic revolution in fin-de-siècle decorative arts. Koch regarded Tiffany as a "rebel in glass," and during the nineteen-fifties Koch and his wife, Gladys, purchased and promoted Tiffany wares at a time when few others did. Their collection forms the core of this auction of twentieth-century decorative art works, which includes a silver-mounted glass paperweight, made by Tiffany circa 1905, among the highlighted lots. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 212-636-2000.)

NEW YORK ARMORY ANTIQUES SHOW
The latest Wendy production offers a wide range of furniture, jewelry, rugs, and decorative art works from around the globe. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. 212-472-1180. March 3-7.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA
Tchaikovsky's gritty and melodramatic "Queen of Spades" may lack the emotional involvement of



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"Eugene Onegin," but it's still a fabulous vehicle for a first-rate cast—which the Met unstintingly provides in this revival of Elijah Moshinsky's luxurious but sharp-edged production from 1995. Plácido Domingo, in the role of Ghermann, shares the stage with such artists as Adrianne Pieczonka, Felicity Palmer, Nikolai Putilin, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky; Vladimir Jurowski draws sinuous shapes and bold colors from a grateful Met orchestra. (March 3 at 7:30. This is the final performance.) ♦ The Met's revival of Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's production of **"L'Italiana in Algeri"** is a thoroughly happy affair; fears that the Russian mezzo-soprano Olga Borodina (whose tone color is less like Chianti than kvass) might not be adept at comedy parts have been deliciously defused. Also featuring such excellent Rossinians as Juan Diego Flórez, Earle Patriarco, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; James Levine conducts. (March 4 at 8.) ♦ With Barry Banks replacing Flórez. (March 8 at 8.) ♦ Marthe Keller directs a new production of **"Don Giovanni,"** featuring Anja Harteros, Christine Goerke, Hei-Kyung Hong, Thomas Hampson (in the title role), and René Pape; Levine. (March 5 and March 9 at 8.) ♦ Renée Fleming, Ramón Vargas, and Dmitri Hvorostovsky return to the leading roles of **"La Traviata,"** with Valery Gergiev taking the podium for the final performance of the season. (March 6 at 1:30.) ♦ Luciano Pavarotti, trying to make a more graceful Met exit than he made last season, will be eased into three final performances of **"Tosca,"** in which Carol Vaness and Samuel Ramey join him in the leading roles; Levine. (March 6 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 212-362-6000.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA
Mark Delavan has been a primo basso with City Opera for more than a decade now, but his début in the title role of Stephen Sondheim's **"Sweeney Todd"** will be the highlight of the opening production of the company's spring season. "Sweeney" is an almost operatic work with a solid, sinister story and genuine emotions, and Harold Prince's 1984 production is justly famous. The West End veteran Elaine Paige, singing the role of Mrs. Lovett, joins Delavan for a preview performance and the official opening-night benefit. (March 7 at 1:30 and March 9 at 6:30.) ♦ Two more previews, featuring Timothy Nolen in the title role. (March 5-6 at 8.) ♦ Another preview, with Delavan and Myrna Paris. (March 6 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 212-870-5570.)

"IL RITORNO D'ULISSE"
The South African artist William Kentridge, best known for his short, haunting animated films in charcoal, turned to the stage in the early nineties, producing works marked by their collagelike effusion of mediums. For his adaptation of "Ulisse"—which reconceives the plot as the dream of a man dying in a Johannesburg hospital—he collaborates with Handspring Puppet Company and the Ricercar Consort (whose director, Philippe Peirlot, has made a new arrangement of Monteverdi's score). (John Jay Theatre, Tenth Ave. at 58th St. 212-721-6500. March 2-3 and March 5-6 at 8.)

GOLDEN FLEECE, LTD.
The chamber-opera company performs one-acts based on works by Shakespeare (Jack Gottlieb's "The English Lesson"), Chaucer (Ned Rorem's "The Robbers"), and the Viennese decadent Sacher-Masoch ("Venus in Furs," by Yoav Gal). (14th Street Y Theatre, 344 E. 14th St. 212-691-6105. March 4-5 at 8, March 6 at 4 and 8, and March 7 at 4 and 7.)

"HESTER PRYNNE AT DEATH"
As part of a celebration of Nathaniel Hawthorne's bicentennial year, the 92nd Street Y presents the world première of Stephen Paulus's chamber opera based on "The Scarlet Letter," a vehicle designed for the soprano Elizabeth Dabney. (Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. March 8 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Lorin Maazel, a big fan of the much admired young cellist Han-Na Chang, conducts the orchestra to accompany her in Dvořák's Cello Concerto, part of an Eastern European program that concludes with Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. (Avery Fisher Hall. 212-875-5656. March 4 at 7:30, March 5 at 11 A.M., and March 6 at 8.)

COLLEGIUM VOCALE GENT AND ORCHESTRE DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES
The conductor Philippe Herreweghe's interpretations (in repertory ranging from Bach to Schoenberg) have a melting lyricism and glowing, soft-edged textures; he's a symbolist in sound. Herreweghe brings two of his renowned period-instrument ensembles to Avery Fisher Hall for performances of Bach's St. Matthew Passion and Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis"; the soloists include the tenor Mark Padmore. (212-721-6500. March 5 at 8 and March 7 at 3.)

NETHERLANDS BACH SOCIETY
Few early-music groups have as distinguished a pedigree as the Society, which was founded in 1921. Jos van Veldhoven conducts the singers and players in their first American tour, a mostly Bach program (including the Brandenburg Concerto No. 4) that features the phenomenal recorder soloist Marion Verbruggen. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 212-279-4200. March 8 at 8.)

PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA
Christoph Eschenbach leads the Philadelphians in works by Mahler (the Adagio from Symphony No. 10) and Schoenberg ("Verklärte Nacht"). Also featured on the program is the prodigy Lang Lang, who will attempt to relax a bit in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, a contemplative work devoid of pyrotechnical displays. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 9 at 8.)

RECITALS

WEILL RECITAL HALL
March 3 at 7:30: A quartet of prominent young singers—including the Met's Isabel Bayrakdarian and Russell Braun—perform Brahms's sunny "Liebeslieder Walzer" along with the more complex "Spanisches Liebeslieder," by his mentor, Schumann. ♦ March 4 at 7:30: "Making Music: Mark-Anthony Turnage," a program in which such esteemed musicians as the saxophonist Joe Lovano and the Borromeo String Quartet perform chamber works by the jazz-influenced British composer, who will add some commentary of his own. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800.)

MUSIC AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
March 4 at 7: The Metropolitan Museum Artists in Concert—a group that brings together such noted young strings-about-town as the violinist Colin Jacobsen and the cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach—perform string quintets by Boccherini, Mozart (in E-Flat Major, K. 614), and Chen Yi. ♦ March 5 at 8: Maxim Vengerov—a young violinist of smarts, style, and supernal technique—offers an "illustrated talk" on Brahms's Violin Sonata No. 3 in D Minor. (Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. 212-570-3949.)

BARGEMUSIC
Olga Bloom's chamber-music series devotes four days of concerts to music by Nikolai Medtner, the underrated early-twentieth-century composer and pianist whose music combines a surging Russian lyricism with a love for the contrapuntal tradition of his German background. The grand finale, on March 7, features the soprano Jody Applebaum and her illustrious husband, the pianist Marc-André Hamelin, in a program featuring several of the "Goethe-Lieder" and the "Night Wind" Sonata. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083. March 4-6 at 7:30 and March 7 at 4. For details, see www.bargemusic.org.)

NEW YORK FESTIVAL OF SONG: "BEL CANTO DYNASTY"
The mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe makes a guest appearance at the pianist Steven Blier's latest soirée, which celebrates the long life and inspired artistry of Pauline Viardot with songs by some of the composers that she championed (such as Fauré, Chopin, and Tchaikovsky) as well as several that she composed herself. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330. March 4 at 8.)

JERUSALEM STRING QUARTET
The robust and winningly lyrical young Israeli group comes to New York for an evening of quartets by Haydn (the "Lark"), Ravel, and Smetana. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. March 6 at 8.)

MET CHAMBER ENSEMBLE
James Levine joins his musicians at the keyboard to offer a connoisseur program of works by Schubert (the Piano Trio in B-Flat Major, D. 898), Messiaen, and the composers of the Second Viennese School. (Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 7 at 5.)

MATTHIAS GOERNE AND CHRISTOPH ESCHENBACH
An unconventional concert of songs from the dramatic young baritone and the veteran conductor-pianist draws on works by Mahler (including the "Kindertotenlieder," in their bare-bones voice-and-piano versions) and Schumann. (Carnegie Hall. 212-247-7800. March 7 at 8.)

NEW MUSIC AT MERKIN CONCERT HALL
March 8 at 8: The formidable New York New Music Ensemble gets cozy with "House Music," in which the clarinettist Jean Kopperud, the pianist Stephen Gosling, and others gather for works by Leo Kraft ("Cape Cod Sketches"), Elizabeth Brown, George Perle, and Arnold Schoenberg (Webern's arrangement of the not so cozy First Chamber Symphony). ♦ March 9 at 8: "Celebrating the Americas," a concert with the Meridian Arts Ensemble that includes music for brass by Revueltas and Nurock. (129 W. 67th St. 212-501-3330.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Ida Kavafian and Anne-Marie McDermott team up for a recital of music for violin and piano by Bach, Stravinsky (the "Divertimento"), and Bruce Adolphe at the Rose Studio. (Rose Building, Lincoln Center. 212-875-5788. March 9 at 7:30.)

"NAUMBURG LOOKS BACK": ELMAR OLIVEIRA
The Naumburg Foundation, renowned for its assistance to young musicians, offers a new recital series that lets us catch up with some of its former prizewinners, many of whom have gone on to distinguished careers. The first concert features the superb violinist (a 1975 winner) performing a program of Bach, Pizzetti, Prokofiev (the slashing Sonata No. 1 in F Minor), and Ravel. (Alice Tully Hall. 212-721-6500. March 9 at 8.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
March 4 at 6: Kate Christensen reads from her latest novel, "The Epicure's Lament." (The Corner Bookstore, Madison Ave. at 93rd St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ March 8 at 7: The *Paris Review* contributors Michael Chabon and Yiyun Li read from their work. (Paula Cooper Gallery, 521 W. 21st St. Tickets at the door.) ♦ March 8 at 7:30: Deborah Landau and David Lehman read from their poetry. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ March 9 at 7: Roddy Doyle offers passages from his forthcoming novel, "Oh, Play That Thing." (Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. For more information, call 212-854-7907.)

TALKS
March 3 at 8: John Hodgman's "Little Gray Book" lecture series returns from a winter hiatus with an evening of animal tales. The performers include Joshuah Bearman, of *The Believer,* John Jeremiah Sullivan, the author of "Blood Horses," and Hannah Tinti, whose short-story collection is titled "Animal Crackers." (Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn. 718-782-5188.) ♦ March 4 at 7: The artist Glenn Ligon interviews the curator Thelma Golden. (The New Museum, 583 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Sts. 212-219-1222.) ♦ March 9 at 6: The Small Press Center's lecture series about the Algonquin Round Table continues with "Robert Benchley: Benchley Despite Himself," a one-man show written and performed by Benchley's grandson Nat. (20 W. 44th St. 212-840-1840.) ♦ March 9 at 6:30: David Denby, a film critic for this magazine, discusses "American Sucker," his new book about his misadventures in the financial markets. (Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 212-534-1672.)

SOUND
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MOVIES OPENING

COLLATERAL DAMAGES
Étienne Sauret's documentary about a group of New York City firefighters coping with the aftermath of the World Trade Center attacks. Shown with his earlier film "The First 24 Hours," a tour of downtown Manhattan after the towers fell. Opening March 3. (Film Forum.)

HIDALGO
In an adventure epic directed by Joe Johnston, Viggo Mortensen plays an American cowboy who competes in the Ocean of Fire, a three-thousand-mile horse race across the Arabian Desert. With Omar Sharif. Opening March 5.

JAMES' JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM
A dramatic film about an African Christian (Siyabonga Melongisi Shibe) who runs into trouble during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Directed by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz. In Hebrew, English, and Zulu. Opening March 5. (Film Forum.)

THE RECKONING
A wayward priest (Paul Bettany) and a troupe of actors become involved in the murder of a young boy, in a drama set in fourteenth-century England. With Willem Dafoe and Vincent Cassell. Directed by Paul McGuigan. Opening March 5. (Angelika Film Center and Beekman.)

STARSKY & HUTCH
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening March 5.

LA VIE PROMISE
Isabelle Huppert plays a prostitute on the streets of Nice who reunites with her estranged teenage daughter, in a drama directed by Olivier Dahan. In French. Opening March 5. (Angelika Film Center.)

FILM NOTES

CITY OF GOD
Just how far into your face can a movie get? This one has every intention of leaving you scalded and bruised. Set in Rio de Janeiro, it was directed by Fernando Meirelles, who tries every trick known to cameramen: freeze frames, whip pans, multiple dissolves, slow motion, double motion, any kind of motion. The object is to keep pace with his characters, the young and dispossessed of the Brazilian slums. The movie hastens roughly from the nineteen-sixties to the eighties, as we watch the boys either die or grow old before their time. The result is a jolting ride, but such is the skill on show that we run the risk of being too exhilarated to notice every death; does the film convince in its plea for the forgotten poor, or are we encouraged to forget them as they fall? In Portuguese.—*Anthony Lane* (Reviewed in our issue of 1/20/03.) (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 1, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, and 19th Street East 6.)

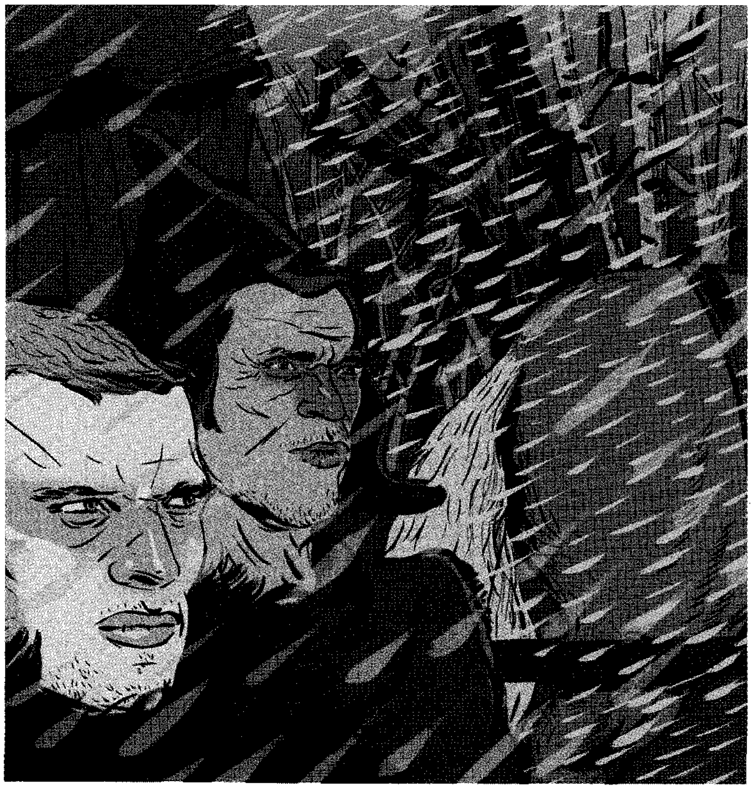
COMPULSION
Based on the famous case of two Chicago Raskolnikovs—Loeb and Leopold, brilliant students but miserably sloppy murderers. This 1959 movie has a stylish, jazz-age format, but the script can't make up its little bit of mind—is it an exploitation of thrills and decadence, or a piece of crime research, or an attack on capital punishment? The three principals—Dean Stockwell, Bradford Dillman, and Orson Welles as their lawyer—were jointly given the Best Actor Award at Cannes, but there's only one remarkable performance—Stockwell's as Judd Steiner (i.e., Nathan Leopold). It's always great to see Welles, but as a spokesman for humanity and humility he's a terrible humbug, and the oration he's called upon to deliver is just blather. (Clarence Darrow's two-day summation is reduced to twelve minutes of spongy sentiment.) There are all kinds of possibilities in the material, but the movie settles for all-purpose generalities. With Diane Varsi, Richard Anderson, E. G. Marshall, and Martin Milner as the student-reporter (if the murderers had really been the aesthetes they were said to be, he would have been the victim).—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; March 9.)

THE COOLER
This tough and sentimental genre film feels like a B movie from 1956 with a dirty mouth. Bernie Lootz (William H. Macy) has such terrible luck that a Vegas casino owner named Shelly (Alec Baldwin) uses him as a "cooler": no sooner does Bernie join a crap game than anyone with a hot hand immediately begins to lose. But then Bernie falls in love with a young cocktail waitress, Natalie (Maria Bello), and his magic suddenly shifts: now everyone around him wins, which is big trouble for Bernie. The writer-director Wayne Kramer keeps the color scheme of this Runyonesque fable harsh and bright—the night tones of Vegas, seen from its underside. The movie is set in sordid casinos and the kind of green-walled motel room in which fornication takes place in the adjoining room at a colossal volume. The crud and the petty desperation of "The Cooler" are immensely enjoyable as atmosphere, and the actors attack their roles with relish.—*David Denby* (1/12/04) (Angelika Film Center and Sutton 1 and 2.)

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE
Luis Buñuel's most frivolously witty movie, directed (at the age of seventy-two) with exhilarating ease. It's a cosmic vaudeville show—an Old Master's mischief. He is no longer savage about the hypocrisy and inanity of the privileged classes; he has grown almost fond of their follies—the way one can grow fond of the snarls and the silliness of vicious pets. This episodic story is about a group of six friends—discreetly charming amoral beasts whose attempts to have dinner together are always being interrupted: food, that ritual center of bourgeois well-being, keeps eluding them. Buñuel takes an offhand, prankish approach to the medium; he keeps tweaking us, catching us up in an anecdote or a spooky death joke, and then dropping it. With Stéphane Audran, Julien Bertheau (who plays a bishop with supreme finesse), Fernando Rey, Delphine Seyrig, Jean-Pierre Cassel, Paul Frankeur, Bulle Ogier, Milena Vukotia, Claude Piéplu, and Michel Piccoli. Originally released in 1972. In French.—*P.K.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; March 5.)

THE DREAMERS
An American college student named Matthew (Michael Pitt) is in Paris in 1968 and soaking up as many movies as he can. When the government cracks down on the state-sponsored Cinémathèque Française, he gets caught up in the demonstrations and meets a red-bereted beauty named Isabelle (Eva Green) and her twin brother, Théo (Louis Garrel), who has the looks of a debauched medieval priest. The director, Bernardo Bertolucci, loves to create a hothouse. In "Last Tango in Paris," he used enclosed space to explore the limits of romantic desire, but here the conceit is a different kind of exuberance: cinephilia. Isabelle, Théo, and Matthew argue endlessly about movies and see themselves as characters playing roles. As the three embark on increasingly risqué sexual games, Bertolucci longs to re-create the moment when film, politics, and sex mutually reinforced each other as the preoccupations of youth. It's a saddening nostalgia, and the movie, despite its attempt to shock us with incest and perversities, has an air of inconsequence about it. The three aren't making a revolution in this hothouse, they're making a listless blue movie. In French and English.—*D.D.* (2/9/04) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, and Sunshine Cinema.)

GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING
A slow, attentive movie about a painter and his model demands the kind of patience that moviegoers may feel reluctant to supply. But Peter Webber's reworking of Tracy Chevalier's novel is worth staying with: it casts a heavy spell as it unfolds the tale of Griet (Scarlett Johansson), a maid newly arrived in the house of Johannes Vermeer (Colin Firth). The year is 1665, and the period reconstruction, for those who are aroused by such things, is—apart from a few modern lines of dialogue—formidably detailed. The danger with such beautifying efforts is that cinema will turn into a branch of taxidermy, and what keeps Webber's movie alive is the tenseness of the setup (will this girl stay in the artist's household, and, if so, will she become his lover or his muse?) and, above all, the presence of Johansson. She is often wordless and close



Paul Bettany and Willem Dafoe in "The Reckoning," opening March 5.

ZOHAR LAZAR

to plain onscreen, but wait for the ardor with which she can summon a closeup and bloom under its gaze; this is her film, not Vermeer's, all the way.—*A.L.* (12/15/03) (Chelsea Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

GOODBYE LENIN!
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

GUN FURY
Men left for dead regain full health with alarming rapidity in Raoul Walsh's eye-popping Technicolor Southwestern, but it's still one of the sturdiest showcases for the 3-D process. In 1953, the same year that Donna Reed earned an Oscar for "From Here to Eternity," she played an Atlanta belle seized by an embittered former Confederate officer (Phil Carey) while en route with her fiancé (Rock Hudson) to their California ranch. Despite some high-flown debates over peace and violence and the right way to begin anew after the Civil War, what gives this movie its real tension is the constant threat of Reed's ravishment at the hands of Carey and his thugs, who include Lee Marvin and Neville Brand. The showoff 3-D effects take a back seat to the escalating suspense as Hudson sets out to rescue his bride-to-be with the help of Carey's embittered right-hand man (Leo Gordon). The best 3-D shot comes early: a speeding stagecoach rendered from the driver's perspective. The future best-seller writer Irving Wallace shares credit with Roy Huggins for carving a script from the novel "Ten Against Caesar," by Kathleen B. George and Robert A. Granger.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum; March 4.)

IN AMERICA
The tale of an Irish family that travels to New York in search of a better life, or, at any rate, a life. Johnny (Paddy Considine), his wife, Sarah (Samantha Morton), and their daughters, Christy (Sarah Bolger) and Ariel (Emma Bolger), settle near Hell's Kitchen and wrestle, as you would expect, with outlandish local customs such as air-conditioners and Halloween. Despite the title, the director, Jim Sheridan, is gripped less by the country in which his characters find themselves than by their own hope and anguish: there was a third child, a boy, who died before they came to the States. The movie has a busy intensity but lacks the rooted confidence of Sheridan's Irish work, as seen in "My Left Foot" and "In the Name of the Father." What ties it down, if anything, is the performance of Sarah Bolger—ten years old when the picture was made, but the sanest and saddest person on the block.—*A.L.* (12/1/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

MONSTER
To play Aileen Wuornos, the real-life prostitute and serial killer who was executed in 2002, Charlize Theron put on thirty pounds and endured an hour and a half of attention each shooting day from the makeup artist Toni G. What's remarkable about the film is not just Theron's transformation into a half-mad, beaten-up prostitute, but the disciplined performance that she gives. The actress twitches and shrugs as if her tendons were directed by will alone. She's telling the world to kiss off, yet, inevitably, she's reduced to sticking out her thumb on the highway in search of a paying customer. When a scuzzy client abuses her, she snaps, empties a revolver into his chest, and lets out a war whoop of triumph. The moment is truly frightening. Theron's ferocity pushes the material over the top, but her tenderness—the flashes of gentleness and vulnerability—retrieves it from tabloid exploitation and camp horror. With Christina Ricci as the petulant lower-middle-class girl who becomes Wuornos's lover. Written and directed by Patty Jenkins and shot in that bedraggled kingdom of chaos Central Florida.—*D.D.* (1/26/04) (Battery Park 16, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

MY ARCHITECT
A traditional quest, superbly told. Nathaniel Kahn seeks to understand the life of his father, the architect Louis I. Kahn; his task is made even more difficult by the fact that Kahn had three separate and coexisting families: a wife and two mistresses with one child apiece. For his part, Nathaniel was an illegitimate son and only eleven when his father died; his interviews are laced with raw, uncut feeling for a man he never really knew. Throughout the documentary, he uses Kahn's buildings (beautifully photographed) as a kind of wedge into his father's motivations and personality. He discovers that Kahn's more famous contemporaries, like I. M. Pei, appear haunted by his career: is it better to have designed three or four unexampled buildings, as Kahn did, or to have had a successful, high-profile architectural practice? Perhaps more surprising, the women in Kahn's life don't regret the way he treated them. Anne Tyng, Kahn's co-worker and mistress, explains her affection this way: "The ideas that you work on together connect you always somehow." In the end, Nathaniel's homage to his father demonstrates what it was like to be caught in his creative whirlwind.—*Michael Agger* (Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

MYSTIC RIVER
Clint Eastwood's sombre masterpiece, from a novel by Dennis Lehane (Brian Helgeland did the adaptation), is about a working-class Catholic community in Boston held in thrall by an old crime. Back in the seventies, one of three eleven-year-old boys who were close friends was taken away by two men pretending to be cops and sexually assaulted for days before he finally escaped. But it turns out that Dave (Tim Robbins) never escaped at all. Twenty-five years later, he is still shrouded in dreams and terror, and his two friends, Sean (Kevin Bacon), a homicide detective, and Jimmy (Sean Penn), an ex-con who runs a corner grocery, still feel the shame of not helping him. When Jimmy's nineteen-year-old daughter is murdered, the three are uneasily brought back together again. The movie's feeling for the neighborhood milieu is so convincing because there's no distinction between background and foreground—everything we see (faces, living rooms, back yards, weather, battered old cars) is dramatically relevant. Eastwood directs in a gray, end-of-day light and with a minimum of camera rhetoric; he lets the script and the actors do the work. Penn does a few semi-psychotic soliloquies in which he takes off into the stratosphere, joining Marlon Brando as one of the great tragic actors of the screen.—*D.D.* (10/13/03) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 2, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

OSAMA
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Union Square.)

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST
Mel Gibson's bloody re-creation of the last twelve hours in the life of Jesus is one of the cruellest movies in the history of the cinema. Gibson and the screenwriter Benedict Fitzgerald selected and enhanced incidents from the four Gospels and collated them into a single, surpassingly violent narrative in which the incomparable glories of Jesus' temperament—the joyousness, the brilliance, the heart-stopping eloquence—are all but effaced by the spectacle of his physical destruction. The lashing and flaying, often in slow-motion, go on forever, and Gibson displays a curious technical fascination with the details of crucifixion—huge nails being hammered into hands and feet, with James Caviezel's Jesus howling at each blow. Here and there, the movie has a kind of grim power, and Caleb Deschanel's even gray lighting at the Crucifixion is stunning, but this is a sickening, unilluminating, and ignorant show. The filmmakers have also changed in small ways a number of things from the Gospels and ignored what historians know of ancient Judea, all with the result of making the Jewish leaders more, and the Roman leaders less, responsible for the death of Jesus. It's a deeply angry film, and one wonders how believers can react to it with anything but guilt, fear, or loathing.—*D.D.* (3/1/04) (Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

STARSKY & HUTCH
The comedic teammates Owen Wilson and Ben Stiller send up one of the hallmark buddy-cop shows of the seventies. This was a fresh idea nine years ago when Spike Jonze and the Beastie Boys did it in the video for "Sabotage." Five minutes of ridiculous rooftop jumps and freeze-frame double takes are about all you need before the joke gets old. Still, Wilson and Stiller have an appealing, casual chemistry (as they did in "Zoolander"), and some of the scenes go in unexpected directions. For period detail, the 1974 Ford Torino takes center stage, but cheers to the prop master who found the vintage rubber slingshot. Directed by Todd Phillips, who can't get enough of seventies television: his next announced project is an adaptation of "The Six Million Dollar Man."—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

TOUCHING THE VOID
Kevin Macdonald's new film is a dismaying documentary account of what happened on the side of a mountain in 1985. Two young British climbers, Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, ascended the west face of Siula Grande, in the Peruvian Andes, and then began their descent. Simpson slipped and injured his leg, then fell again, this time off the brink of a ridge. He was hanging from the end of a rope; at the other end, sliding fast, was Yates, who cut the rope to save himself. You come out of the movie arguing hotly—as Macdonald wants you to do—about the rights and wrongs of that dire moment, and musing on the fact that Simpson survived his ordeal. The two men tell their story with a sang-froid verging on the comical, intercut with a dramatic reconstruction of the climb itself. The cinematography, all vertiginous horror and beauty, is by Mike Eley; it leaves us with a mad inkling of what drives a mountaineer, as well as a determination to stay, at all costs, on the level.—*A.L.* (1/19/04) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE
A boy is given a bicycle. He grows up to compete, under the tutelage of his ferocious grandmother, in the Tour de France, only to be kidnapped and smuggled overseas. The old lady, with a panting hound in tow, tracks and retrieves the unfortunate cyclist, aided by three crones who feast on a casserole of murdered frogs. Such is the gritty, fantastic plot of Sylvain Chomet's animated film, which could only have emerged from a culture in which the worship of comic books approaches the status of an organized religion. Indeed, there is much to revere in Chomet's swollen caricatures and vertiginous angles, although agnostics may be tempted to point out that a little elastic surrealism goes a long way, and that to learn the exact details of somebody else's dreams—which is what this movie feels like—can be at once haunting and tiresome. In French, just about, though most of it is noise, and no subtitles are required.—*A.L.* (12/1/03) (BAM Rose Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, and Sunshine Cinema.)

ALSO PLAYING

BROKEN LIZARD'S CLUB DREAD
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 64th and 2nd, 62nd & Broadway, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

CAPTURING THE FRIEDMANS (6/2/03)
Village East Cinemas.

DIRTY DANCING: HAVANA NIGHTS
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

THE FOG OF WAR
Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, and Sutton 1 and 2.

KITCHEN STORIES
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THE RETURN
Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED
Village East Cinemas.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 212-777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema Classics, 332 E. 11th St. (212-677-6309).

A cowboy (Viggo Mortensen) and his trusty mustang compete in an Arabian horse race in "Hidalgo," opening March 5.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (212-757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 66th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through March 7: A Bernardo Bertolucci retrospective. March 6 at 1: "Little Buddha" (1993). ♦ March 6 at 4:30: "Stealing Beauty" (1996). ♦ March 7 at 2: "Besieged" (1998). ♦ March 7 at 4: "The Dreamers" (†). ♦ Repertory nights. March 6-7 at 6:30: "Small Change" (1976, François Truffaut; in French).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (212-505-5110)—Through March 4: "Music and Soul in the African Diaspora." March 3-4 at 7: "Susana Baca: Memoria Viva" (2002, Marc Dixon; in Spanish). ♦ March 3 at 9: "Afro-Punk: The Rock and Roll Nigger Experience" (2003, James Spooner). ♦ March 4 at 9: "100% Arabica" (1997, Mahmoud Zemmouri). ♦ Starting March 4: The documentaries of Nicolas Philibert. All films are in French. March 4 at 7:30: "Louvre City" (1990). ♦ March 4 at 9:30 and March 6 at 7: "In the Land of the Deaf" (1992). ♦ March 5 at 7 and March 6 at 9:30: "To Be and to Have" (2003). ♦ March 5 at 9:30 and March 7 at 5:30 and 7: "Animals" (1994). ♦ March 6 at 4:30 and March 7 at 8:30: "Every Little Thing" (1996).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—Luis Buñuel films. March 4 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Diary of a Chambermaid" (1964; in French). ♦ March 5 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie" (†). ♦ March 6-7 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Milky Way" (1968; in French). ♦ March 6-7: BAMkids Film Festival. See www.bam.org for a schedule. ♦ British horror films. March 8 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires" (1974, Roy Ward Baker). ♦ March 9 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Vampyres" (1974, José Ramón Larraz).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (212-727-8110)—Through April 15: An Orson Welles retrospective. March 3 at 1:30, 5:30, and 9:30: "Jane Eyre" (1943, Robert Stevenson). ♦ March 3 at 3:30 and 7:30: "Tomorrow Is Forever" (1945, Irving Pichel). ♦ March 5-8 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Citizen Kane" (1941). ♦ March 9 at 1:20, 5:30, and 9:40: "Compulsion" (†). ♦ March 9 at 3:20 and 7:30: "The Long, Hot Summer" (1958, Martin Ritt). ♦ Starting March 4: 3-D films produced by Columbia. March 4 at 1, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, and 9:40: "Gun Fury" (†) and "Pardon My Backfire" (1953, Jules White).

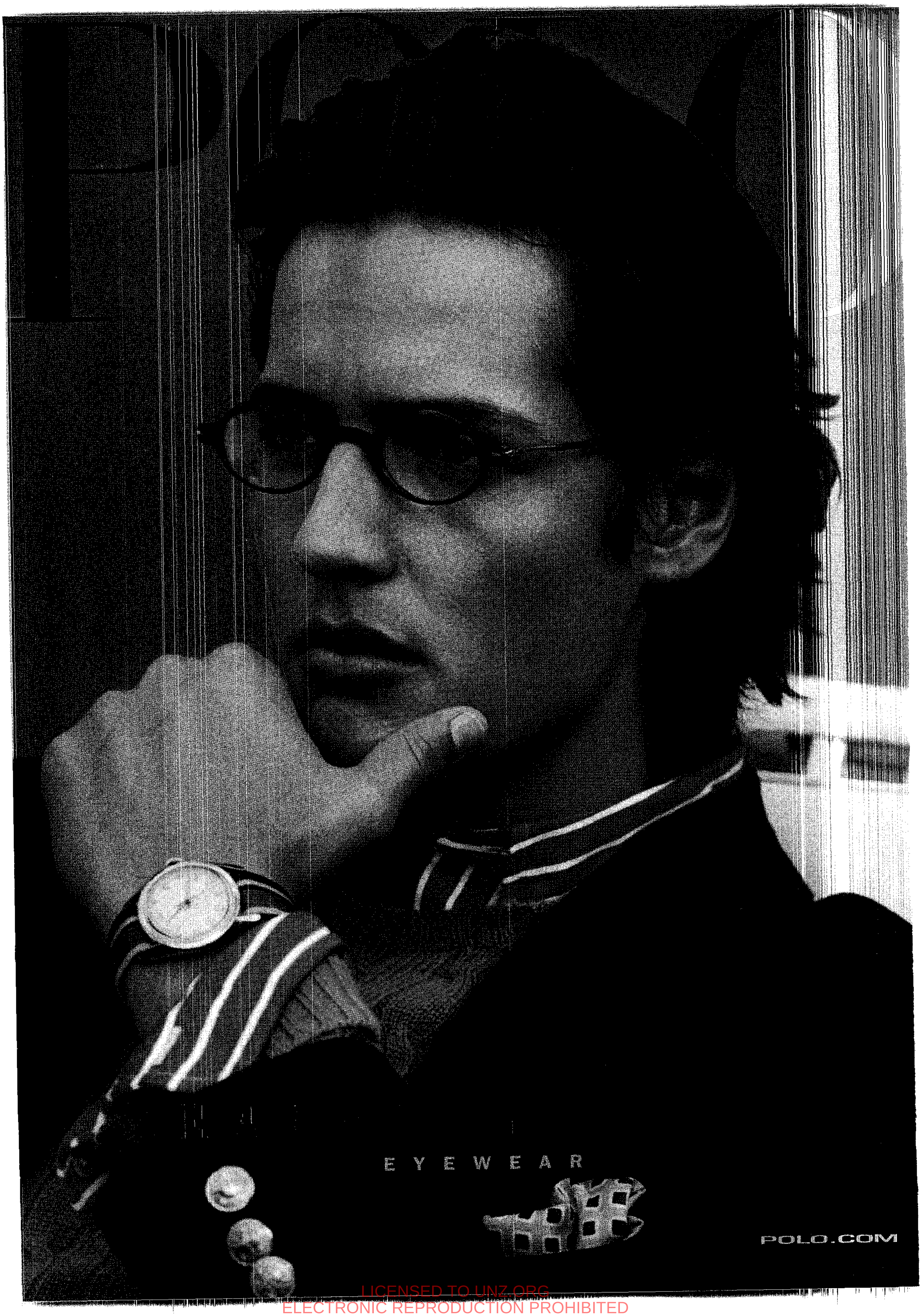
FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160)—Through March 30: A tribute to the French studio Pathé. March 9 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Man About Town" (1947, René Clair; in French).

GRAMERCY THEATRE
127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900)—Through March 11: "Waterfront: A Journey Around Manhattan in Eighteen Films." March 4 at 2: "On the Waterfront" (1954, Elia Kazan). ♦ New films from Canada. March 4 at 4:30 and March 7 at 6:30: "Gaz Bar Blues" (2003, Louis Bélanger; in French). ♦ March 4 at 6:45: "The Saddest Music in the World" (2003, Guy Maddin). ♦ March 4 at 9 and March 5 at 4:30: "Flower and Garnet" (2002, Keith Behrman). ♦ March 5 at 2 and March 7 at 4: "8:17 P.M., Darling Street" (2003, Bernard Emond; in French). ♦ March 5 at 6:30 and March 6 at 1: "The Far Side of the Moon" (2003, Robert Lepage; in French). ♦ March 5 at 9 and March 6 at 3:30: "A Silent Love" (2003, Federico Hidalgo). ♦ March 6 at 6 and March 7 at 1: "Dying at Grace" (2003, Allan King). ♦ March 6 at 9 and March 8 at 6: "Proteus" (2003, John Greyson and Jack Lewis). ♦ Recent acquisitions. March 8 at 8:15: "The Band Wagon" (1953, Vincente Minnelli).

THE NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL
Various locations (212-349-0330)—Starting March 5: Symphony Space, the American Museum of the Moving Image, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and other venues host the sixth year of the festival. For a schedule, visit www.gkids.com.

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (212-358-0573)—Midnight movies. March 5-6: "The Pink Panther Strikes Again" (1976, Blake Edwards).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (212-875-5600)—Through March 10: "Beloved Rogue: A Tribute to Vittorio Gassman." Unless otherwise noted, all films are in Italian. March 3 at 4:30 and 8:40 and March 4 at 6:15: "Cry of the Hunted" (1953, Joseph H. Lewis; in English). ♦ March 3 at 6:15 and March 7 at 3:45: "Bitter Rice" (1949, Giuseppe De Santis). ♦ March 4 at 3:40 and 8: "A Wedding" (1978, Robert Altman; in English). ♦ March 5 at 6:15 and March 8 at 3:20: "The Long Winter" (1991, Jaime Camino; in Spanish). ♦ March 5 at 9 and March 8 at 1 and 8:30: "In the Name of the Italian People" (1971, Dino Risi). ♦ March 6 at 1:30 and March 8 at 6: "We All Loved Each Other So Much" (1974, Ettore Scola). ♦ March 6 at 4:10 and March 7 at 1:30: "Big Deal on Madonna Street" (1958, Mario Monicelli). ♦ March 6 at 6:30: "Life Is a Bed of Roses" (1983, Alain Resnais; in French). ♦ March 6 at 8:45: "La Famiglia" (1987, Scola). ♦ March 7 at 6:15 and March 9 at 1: "War and Peace" (1956, King Vidor).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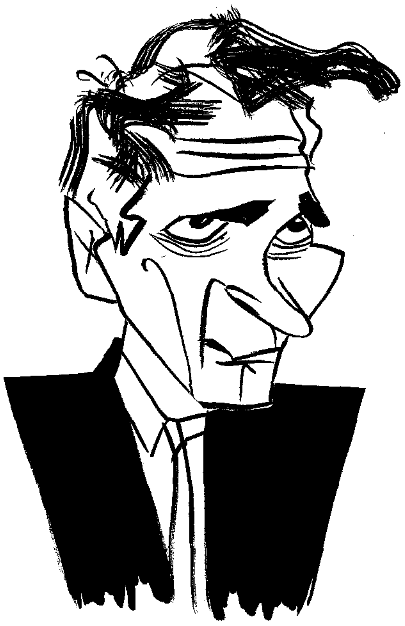
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
RECKLESS DRIVER

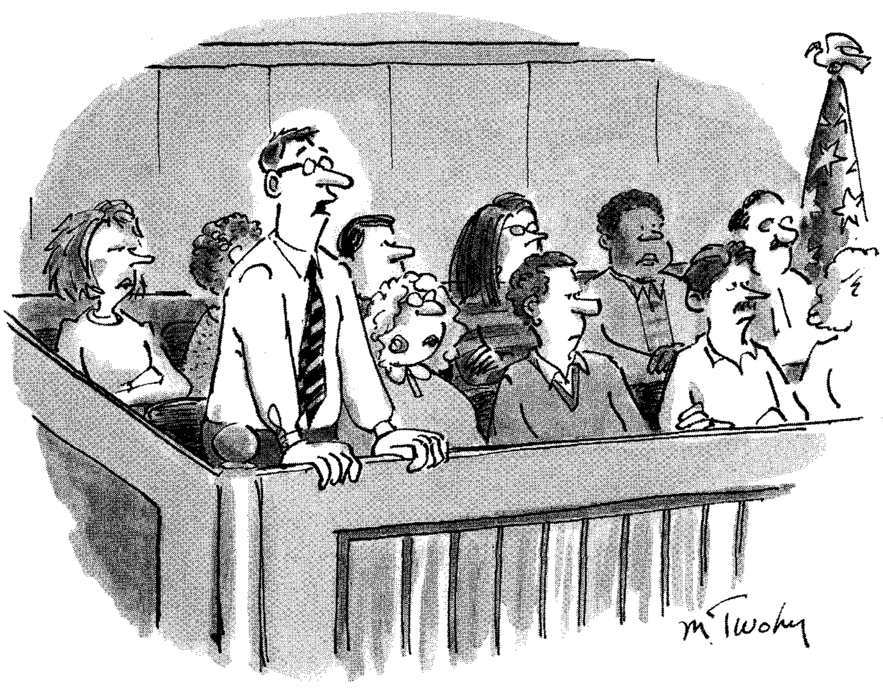
More than any other single person, Ralph Nader is responsible for the existence of automobiles that have seat belts, padded dashboards, air bags, non-impaling steering columns, and gas tanks that don't readily explode when the car gets rear-ended. He is therefore responsible for the existence of some millions of drivers and passengers who would otherwise be dead. Because of Nader, baby foods are no longer spiked with MSG, kids' pajamas no longer catch fire, tap water is safer to drink than it used to be, diseased meat can no longer be sold with impunity, and dental patients getting their teeth X-rayed wear lead aprons to protect their bodies from dangerous zaps. It is Nader's doing, more than anyone else's, that the federal bureaucracy includes an Environmental Protection Agency, an Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and a Consumer Product Safety Commission, all of which have done valuable work in the past and, with luck, may be allowed to do such work again someday. He is the man to thank for the fact that the Freedom of Information Act is a powerful instrument of democratic transparency and accountability. He is the founder of an amazing array of agile, sharp-elbowed research and lobbying organizations that have prodded governments at all levels toward constructive action in areas ranging from insurance rates to nuclear safety. He had help, of course, from his young "raiders," from congressional staffers and their bosses, from citizens, and even from the odd President. But he was the prime mover.

More than any other single person, Ralph Nader is responsible for the fact that George W. Bush is President of the United States. Nader is more responsible than Al Gore, who, in 2000, put himself in the clear by persuading more of his fellow-citizens to vote for him than for anybody else, which normally—in thirty-nine of the forty-two previous Presidential elections, or ninety-three per cent—had been considered adequate to fulfill the candidate's electoral duty. Nader is more responsible than George W. Bush, whose alibi complements Gore's: by attracting fewer votes, both nationally and (according to the preponderance of scientific opinion) in Florida, Bush absolved himself of guilt for his own elevation. A post-election rogues' gallery—Jeb Bush, James Baker, Katherine Harris, William Rehnquist and four of his Supreme Court colleagues—helped, each rogue in his or her own way, but no single one of them could have pulled off the heist without the help of the others. Nader was sufficient unto himself.



For the past three years, everything Nader accomplished during his period of unparalleled creativity, which lasted from around 1963 to around 1976, has been systematically undermined by the Administration that he was instrumental in putting in power. Government efforts on behalf of clean air and water, fuel efficiency, workplace safety, consumer protection, and public health have been starved, stymied, or sabotaged in tandem with the shift of resources from public purposes to high-end private consumption, the increasing identity of government and corporate interests, and the growth of a cult of secrecy and arrogance that began well before September 11, 2001. Nader bears a very large share of responsibility for these spectacular traducements of his proclaimed values. So it is quite a tribute to the brilliance of his early achievements that an argument can still be made that the net effect of his career has been positive.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



"Your Honor, we feel the trial failed to deliver on its pretrial publicity."

• •

That argument will no longer be plausible if Nader succeeds in doing in 2004 what he did in 2000. This time, though, he is unlikely to garner enough strategically placed votes to push the electoral college past the tipping point. Neither before nor after his announcement last week that he will try to get on the ballot in all fifty states was there the slightest sign of enthusiasm for his candidacy. The liberal and leftish outlets that serve what was once his natural constituency overflowed with critiques that ranged from mournful disavowal to bitter denunciation, some of them written by former supporters. The Democratic Party, meanwhile, is in the final stages of a primary campaign that has been as amicable as any in living memory. Thanks to President Bush and the passionate wish of the Democratic rank and file to see the back of him, the Democrats are more united and energized, and less beguiled by the narcissism of small differences, than ever.

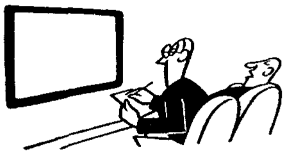
It's safe to predict that Nader will come nowhere near matching the 2.9 million votes he got in 2000. He'll be lucky to get half of the 685,000 he got in 1996. His reasons for running, as he announced them in an interview with Tim Russert on "Meet the Press," don't add up. "Do you believe," Russert asked him, "that there would be a difference between a George Bush Administration and a John Kerry or a John Edwards Administration on judicial nominations, on tax cuts, on environmental enforcement?" "Yes," Nader said, but he went on to say that "corporate government remains in Washington, whether it's Democrats or Republicans"—as if the Supreme Court, the tax code, and the environment were bagatelles. "This candidacy is not going to get many Democratic Party votes," Nader admitted—or lamented, or promised (it was hard to tell which)—at a press conference the next day. He noted that he faces "overwhelming opposition by the liberal intelligentsia," and added, "I think this may be the only candidacy in our memory that is opposed overwhelmingly by people who agree with us on the issues." His strategy, therefore, is to get votes from people who disagree with him on the issues—i.e., Republicans who, he suggested, will support him because they don't like the Bush deficits. Also, he argued, he will help Democrats win congressional seats. Also, his candidacy will constitute "another front" against Bush. A fifth column is more like it.

Ralph Nader turned seventy last Friday. If a Democrat is elected President in November, then the old crusader's 2004 campaign will be merely a happily inconsequential ending to the story of a life spent mostly in creative service. If Bush is elected to a second term, then four more years of Bush policies, Bush deficits, and Bush judges will likely undo what remains of Nader's positive legacy. But if Nader once again succeeds in making himself the decisive factor in a Bush victory, then his legacy will be less than zero. His legacy will be George W. Bush.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

GROVES OF ACADEME

PASSIONS, PAST AND PRESENT



Last week, while the critics, the clergy, and the professional opinion-providers were caught up in the opening, on Ash Wednesday, of "The Passion of the Christ," it seemed a good idea to ask Elaine Pagels, a renowned historian of the early Christian period, to see the film and offer her reaction. Scholarship on the quick, admittedly. Professor Pagels, who teaches at Princeton and is the author of "The Gnostic Gospels" and "The Origin of Satan," seemed hesitant at first. But one evening she viewed "The Passion" with some friends, and afterward she called to say that she was, well, disturbed. And not just because of the unremitting and brutal flaying of Christ, "though my friends said that anyone who had really endured that kind of torture would have been dead a lot earlier in the movie."

Pagels is both a scholar and, in her way, a practicing Christian. Usually, she is measured, soft-spoken, but there was the slightest tone of agitation in her voice: "It's important to remember that this is Lent, and meditations on the Passion of Christ are an important part of the cultural interpretation of human suffering. There's a context for the movie in the history of art. When Christians read the Gospels as historical acts, they will say what Mel Gibson says: that this is the truth, this is our faith. But the important thing is that this film ignores the spin the Gospel writers were pressured to put on their works, the distortions of facts they had to execute. Mel Gibson has no interest whatsoever in that."

Pagels explained that the four Gospel writers of the New Testament probably wrote between 70 and 100 A.D. These were the years following the Roman defeat of the Jews, which left the Temple and the center of Jerusalem in ruins. Acts of sedition by the Jews against their conquerors were met with swift execution. As a result, Pagels said, the Gospels, which were intended not as history but as preaching, as religious propaganda to win followers for the teachings of Christ, portrayed the conflict of the Passion as one between Jesus and the Jewish people, led by Caiaphas. And, though it was the Roman occupiers, under Pontius Pilate, who possessed ultimate political and judicial power in Judea, they are described in the Gospels—and, more starkly, in Gibson's film—as relatively benign.

"Our first informed comment on Pilate comes from Philo of Alexandria, a wealthy, influential Jewish citizen who was part of a delegation sent to Rome to negotiate with the emperor," Pagels said. "The delegation saw the Emperor Caligula in the year 40, seven to ten years after Jesus' death, and Philo writes that Pilate was stubborn and cruel and routinely ordered executions without trial. The other great historian of the period is Josephus, who wrote the history of the war between the Romans and the Jews. He tells us many episodes about Pilate that also go against what the Gospels tell us—that he robbed the public treasury, that he deliberately incited the Jerusalemites. Josephus tells us that when people rioted in protest Pilate sent his soldiers to beat and kill them. So he was far from the man depicted in the Gospels.

"Mel Gibson denies any anti-Semitism, and I can't speak to his motives," Pagels went on, "but there are narrative devices that are clear. The more benign Pilate appears in the movie, the more malignant the Jews are. To deflect responsibility from the Romans for arresting and executing Christ, which Gibson takes from the Gospels and makes even more extreme, is contrary to everything we understand about history. It is implausible that the Jews could be responsible and Pilate a benign governor. There are many examples in the film of a preposterous dialectic: the bad Jews and the good Romans. When the Temple police arrest Jesus, Mary Magdalene turns to the Romans as if they were the policemen on the block, benign protectors of the public order. But the very idea of a Jewish woman turning to Roman soldiers for help is ridiculous."

Unlike many of the critics, Pagels was hesitant about analyzing what effect "The Passion of the Christ" would have on its audiences. But her tone was one of regret.

Pagels pointed out that the history of Western art is rife with representations of the Passion that avoid divisive sentiment. "In the 'St. Matthew Passion,' " she said, "Bach was very aware of the problem of arousing anti-Semitic feelings and he wanted deliberately to avoid that. So at the moment when there is the cry to crucify Christ, the call comes not from an identifiable group of Jews but from all, from the entire chorus. Bach demonstrated what Gibson claims that he wanted to show, the inclination of human beings, universally, to do violence." There were other artists, too—from Palestrina to Bill Viola—who depicted the Passion in a similar spirit.

In the end, she said, "Gibson's movie is no more subtle than 'The Lord of the Rings.' There is the side of good and the side of evil."

—*David Remnick*

MOSCOW POSTCARD
THE PUTIN TOOTHPICK

Among the many signs that the democratic impulse in Russia is beating a gloomy retreat these days is the appearance in restaurants and cafés of the "Putin toothpick."

This requires a word of explanation, perhaps. On March 14th, Russians will go to the polls to choose a President, and they will almost certainly reëlect Vladimir Putin with the biggest landslide since the days of the Supreme Soviet and single-candidate elections. The polls show Putin running (with little evident exertion) between seventy and eighty per cent; none of his Lilliputian competitors have cracked five. Putin is so popular, so vaunted for his image of strength and stability, that the atmosphere of national reverence combines elements of the Soviet and the erotic. Later this month, in time for Putin's reëlection, a female trio called Singing Together will release the album "A Man Like Putin"; the title track is a pop fantasy about a dream boyfriend—"full of strength and free of drink, who wouldn't hurt me or desert me." The song was such a hit that a city in Siberia ordered singing toys—monkeys, raccoons—that play it.

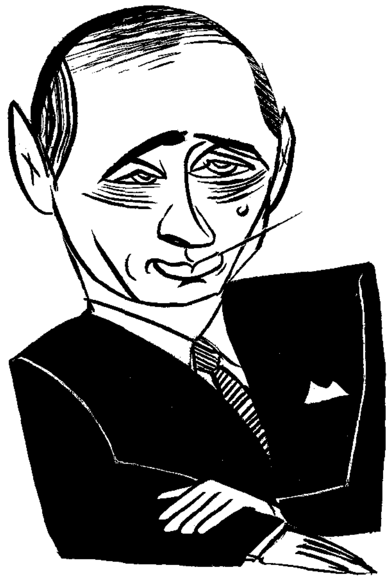
Enter the Putin toothpick. Last week, on Russian television, Yekaterina Chizhova, a representative of a St. Petersburg company called Prosperiti, went on the air, swooning, "Finally, we have a President we can be proud of." Comrade Chizhova then discussed her product: "flosstiks" that come in packets, with the President's portrait emblazoned on the front. Prosperiti also makes the same product available under the portrait of Koni, Putin's black Lab, who, as all Russians know, gave birth on the eve of last December's parliamentary elections (a sweep for the pro-Putin slates). Koni's picture is accompanied by the slogan "Our Koni Is a Mother Hero" (the official title granted to highly fertile women by a Soviet state anxious to raise the country's birth rate).

The Yeltsin years were rife with lingering features of the Soviet experience, but not this kind of glorification. Putin's portraits have become indispensable decorations in government offices. Books about him have begun to resemble the lives of the saints rather than critical biography. Legislators, athletes, artists, and movie stars routinely appear on state television with words of unctuous praise for him. There is not the slightest indication that Putin is displeased with the adulation. When he was asked how he felt about the portraits of him hanging in the offices of Russia's countless state bureaucrats, Putin shrugged and said that he saw nothing wrong with it: a President is a state symbol, like the flag or the anthem.

And yet Lenin, Stalin, or Brezhnev toothpicks would have been unthinkable in the past. Only important places—cities, streets, libraries, universities, steel mills, stadiums—were deemed worthy of bearing such names. The regime lived by the canon, in which the leader belonged to the world of the grand and the elevated, and was detached from the small and the mundane. Even ruble bills that bore Lenin's portrait came to be seen as unworthy. "Remove Lenin from money" was a line by Andrei Voznesensky, a celebrated young poet in the nineteen-sixties.

In fact, Putin toothpicks evoke the sort of anti-Soviet jokes that were popular in the late Brezhnev era, when private political humor was no longer regarded as a state crime. For example, in 1970, the hundredth anniversary of Lenin's birth, people made jokes that imagined Lenin "souvenirs." Sitting in their kitchens, they would laugh about the sale of a perfume called the Odor of Lenin or a triple bed using the slogan *Lenin s Nami*—"Lenin Is with Us." As it happens, a Putin-bearing tool for picking one's teeth is actually quite a funny concept, given that, in Russian, when you say something's "stuck in your teeth" it means that you're sick of it.

Prosperiti certainly didn't mean for its toothpicks to be taken as a cynical joke. But these days, along with the Soviet-style glorification of Putin, his name and image are sometimes used in ways that make it hard to tell whether the President is an object of worship or of ridicule. The old Soviet attitudes toward state authority may be coming back, but the new market mentality isn't giving ground. Unlike the ideological Communist state, where the leader was an icon, in today's Russia the President, like his dog, is a celebrity. And celebrities make good brands.



Vladimir Putin

Prosperiti, however, needs to pay keener attention to political details if it is to deify President Putin properly and patriotically. Under Putin's portrait is a flag, a tricolor in red, white, and blue. But the order is out of whack, making it seem as if he were the leader not of Mother Russia but of little Holland. In a true cult of personality, the Prosperiti executives would have been tried as "Dutch spies" and shot.

—*Masha Lipman*

THE BOARDS

MORE

What you don't know about Yeardley Smith is probably a lot. She itemized examples last week, before a rehearsal for her autobiographical one-woman play, "More" (which she wrote), at the Union Square Theatre: "You don't know that I was in 'She-Devil,' with Roseanne Barr and Meryl Streep, because all my scenes were cut out. You don't know that I did a remake of 'Journey to the Center of the Earth'—Emo Philips was in it—because the film was never released. You don't know that I was in 'Say Anything,' with John Cusack, because I got fired before they started shooting and the producer's daughter got my role." You also don't know about her steady work in a number of television pilots, because "they didn't go." She concluded, "In the last decade, the luck of the draw? Not so lucky."

That's one way of looking at it. But you could also say that Smith's very specific, yet not uncommon, childhood dream (which comes up several times in "More")—of being a world-famous star, besieged by adoring fans, and decked out in a strapless gown and opulent jewels—has been abundantly fulfilled. For the past fifteen years, Smith has played a leading role in "The Simpsons," as the voice of Lisa Simpson, the girl Hamlet of suburbia. As Lisa, she appears nightly on millions of TV screens around the globe, dressed in the very getup that she pictured as a kid: a strapless gown (even if it's red, not gold lamé, as she had hoped) and an elegant necklace (a pearl choker, alas, not diamonds). She even won an Emmy, in 1992, although, since it was just a voice-over Emmy, nobody noticed. She hid the award in a closet for nine years.

Lately, though, she has been taking her Emmy to work. If you've seen a woman on the subway carrying a D'Agostino bag with gold wings poking out the top, it was probably Smith. The statuette is a prop in the play. ("I have to carry it in every day, because we don't have a safe for it," she explained.) It appears in the segment about a group-therapy class she took called "Shame," in which participants were asked to act out their fears. Smith's fears took the form of a narcissistic, attention-sucking starlet named Lola, who "goes to the supermarket with her Emmy and lets it ride in the shopping cart next to the Cheerios," and shows up at restaurants wearing a tiara and a sash that says "I'm a Celebrity." She says in the play, "Life is good and I'm a little depressed I'm not happier about that." But she can't help adding, "If I were a word, I would be . . . MORE!"

Smith is compact and petite, with kidlike features—eyes like frosted blueberries, pink lips, short blond wedge of hair. Her voice, though slightly squeaky, is not as high as Lisa's. People often beg her to do the Lisa voice on command ("Can you call my five-year-old daughter over the telephone and wish her a happy birthday as Lisa Simpson?"), but she needs a script to channel Lisa properly. To demonstrate, she grabbed a tin of Altoids from the dressing-room table and read from the lid in an aggrieved, hopeful lisp: " 'The Original Celebrated Curiously Strong Wintergreen Artificially Flavored Mints.' " Lisa.

When Smith's agent wanted her to audition for Lisa, back in 1986, when "The Simpsons" was to be a series of short spots on "The Tracey Ullman Show," she balked. "I went, you know, 'I don't wanna!' My mind was still on being the most famous actress in the world, and that didn't include doing a cartoon." But she went anyway. "They said, O.K., super, you got the job, easy-peasy."

"My theory," she said, "is that Lisa Simpson is a reflection of most of our writers and the plight they survived as young people—that they were the smart ones, that they were different, that they were socially not as integrated, that they weren't athletic. I think they're all working out their own angst in Lisa Simpson." This month, while "More" is still playing, Smith will be taping Lisa's next season. "She's a great little girl—extremely bright and thoughtful and an old soul," she said. Lisa may be celebrating just her eighth birthday this year, but it's for the sixteenth time.

—*Liesl Schillinger*

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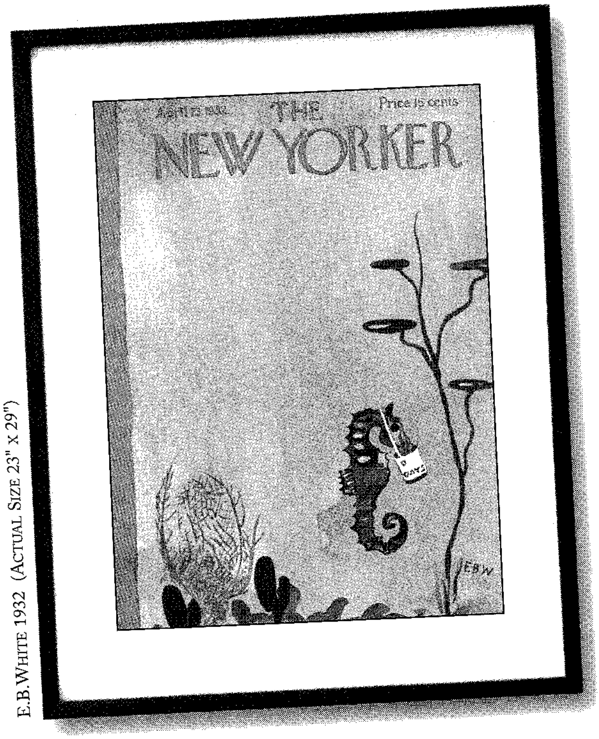
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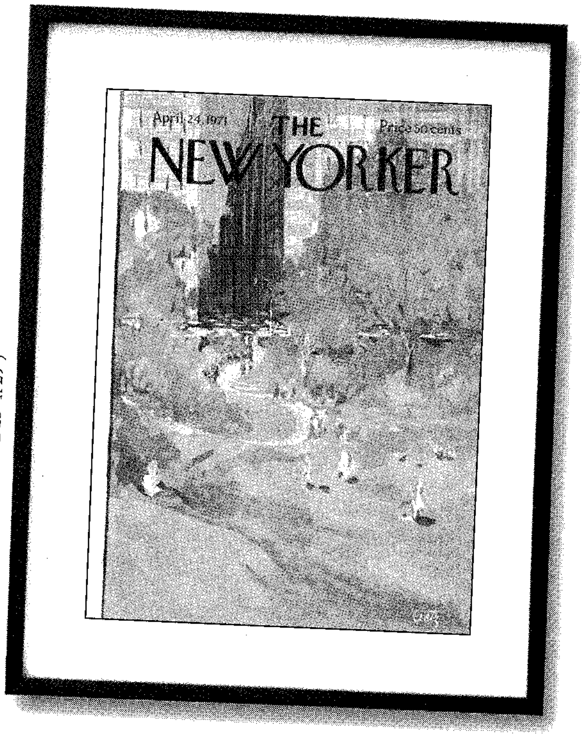
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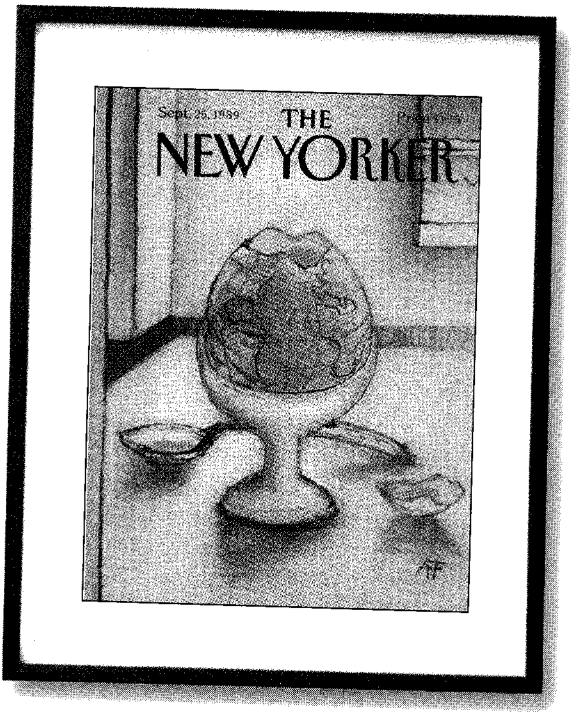
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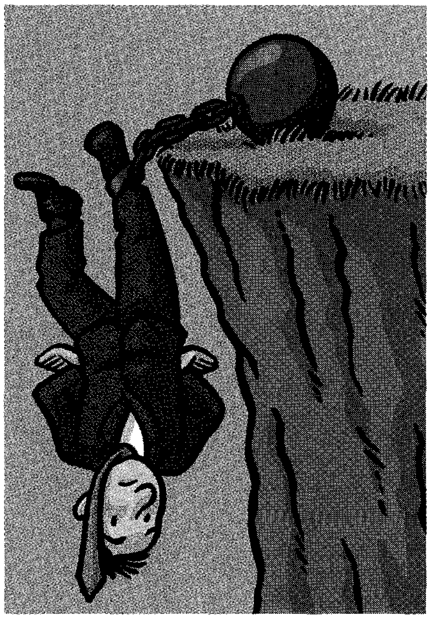
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
BOARD STIFFS

Dennis Kozlowski and Mark Swartz, at Tyco. John, Timothy, and Michael Rigas, at Adelphia. Scott Sullivan, at WorldCom. Andrew Fastow and Jeffrey Skilling, at Enron. Three years after the biggest wave of corporate scandals since the nineteen-twenties, the executives responsible are finally facing judges and juries. And, almost without exception, they're offering up the same defense: the board of directors told me it was O.K.

It's a childish excuse—one can imagine a judge asking, "And if the board had told you it was O.K. to jump off a bridge?"—and it is also, in some cases, untruthful. (Tyco's directors, for instance, did not know that Swartz and Kozlowski were giving themselves year-end bonuses months before the end of the year.) But much of the time these moguls turned mountebanks apprised their boards of their schemes, and the board members didn't object. The Rigases, for example, borrowed billions of dollars from Adelphia, and no one made a fuss. The Enron board signed off on a system in which Fastow, as both the C.F.O. of the company and the head of an outside entity that was doing business with it, was effectively allowed to negotiate with himself. The executives, at least, had a motive that the directors did not: to get preposterously rich. So why did the directors—who were being paid to look after shareholders' interests—turn out to be such pushovers?

One familiar answer is that these boards didn't have enough "outside directors"—people with no connection to the C.E.O. or top management. There's something to this: the fewer management cronies there are on a board, the better. But Enron's board was stacked with blue-chip outside directors, and it made no difference. The real problem was not so much who was in the boardroom as how they acted once they were there. On the Enron and Tyco boards, directors consistently deferred to company executives instead of challenging them. They discouraged debate and disagreement instead of cultivating it. In their own worlds, these directors were alpha males and queen bees with strong opinions and a forthright manner. But in a room together they turned into meek conformists, valuing unity over truth. At Enron, for instance, nearly every board vote was unanimous. When Fastow and Skilling proposed the strategies that eventually destroyed the company, board members asked a few cursory questions, then signed off. The directors had forgotten, apparently, that they had the power to say no.

This kind of thing happens all the time in small groups. People fall prey to what Irving Janis, in his study of American foreign-policy fiascoes, called groupthink. They become increasingly sure that their collective judgment is infallible. They listen mainly to each other, and they emphasize the need for consensus. Living in a kind of echo chamber of their own opinions, they pay attention to information that fits their conclusions and ignore information that does not. As a result, the more that people in this kind of group talk, the more sure they become that they're right. The problem is compounded by the way that C.E.O.s tend to dictate boardroom discussions. In small groups, people who talk first and talk often tend to have an inordinate influence on the group's collective opinion (even when what they're saying makes little sense). If the big talker has high status, his influence, obviously, is even stronger. Charismatic C.E.O.s tend to dominate their boards, even when the people on the board are charismatic C.E.O.s themselves. They don't even think of hard questions not to ask.



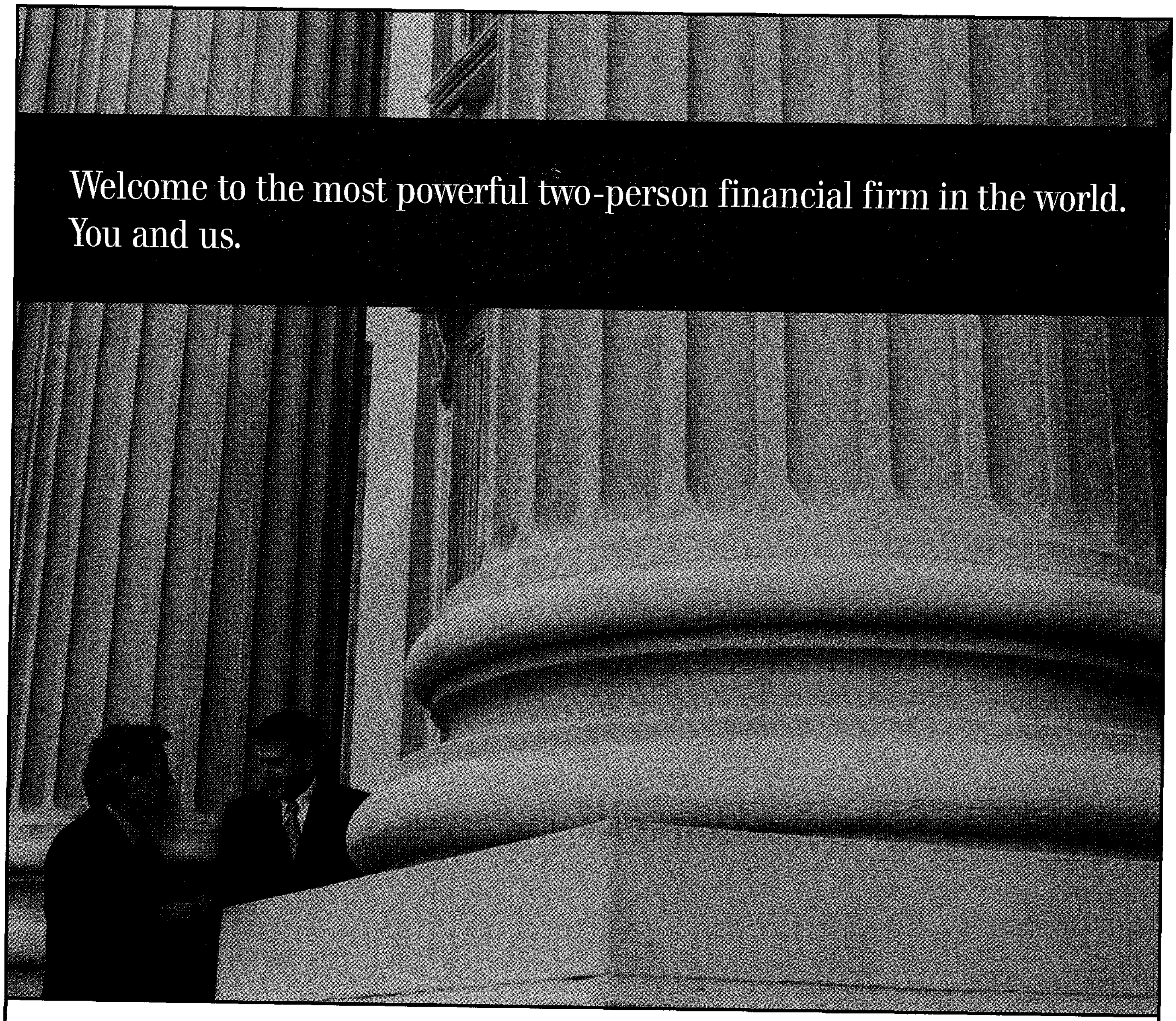
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

Reams of research suggest that a diverse group of independent directors with access to a reasonable amount of information will consistently make better decisions about big-picture questions than even the smartest C.E.O. can. But, for this to work, individual directors have to voice their grievances, and they need to draw on external sources of information, rather than simply lapping up what management feeds them. Smart group decisions emerge out of disagreement, not consensus. But on too many corporate boards dissent is still seen as either superfluous or harmful. A recent Harvard report on boardroom dynamics, though sharply critical of overbearing C.E.O.s, argues that when a board "expresses skepticism about management's proposals, it undermines the supportive climate that is important for its C.E.O. to succeed"—as if the corner office were kindergarten.

It isn't all milk and cookies for company bosses, though. Over the past decade, even as boards rubber-stamped harebrained strategies, they also became more ruthless. C.E.O.s were three times as likely to be fired for underperformance at the end of the nineties as they were in 1980. Too many boards lavish approval and money on a C.E.O. until his plan fails, at which point they fire him and start over. Why even bother having a board at all?

Ultimately, directors—or the members of any small group—need to figure out how to have what the management professors Kathleen Eisenhardt and Jay Bourgeois call "a good fight." They need to recognize that dissent does not mean dissension. Eisenhardt and Bourgeois have found that the most successful companies have leadership teams that actively encourage conflict, recognizing that people can reach an intelligent collective decision even when they disagree. Alfred Sloan, who ran General Motors from 1923 to 1956, was on to something when he said at a meeting, "Gentlemen, I take it that we are all in complete agreement on the decision here. Then, I propose that we postpone further discussion . . . to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about."

—*James Surowiecki*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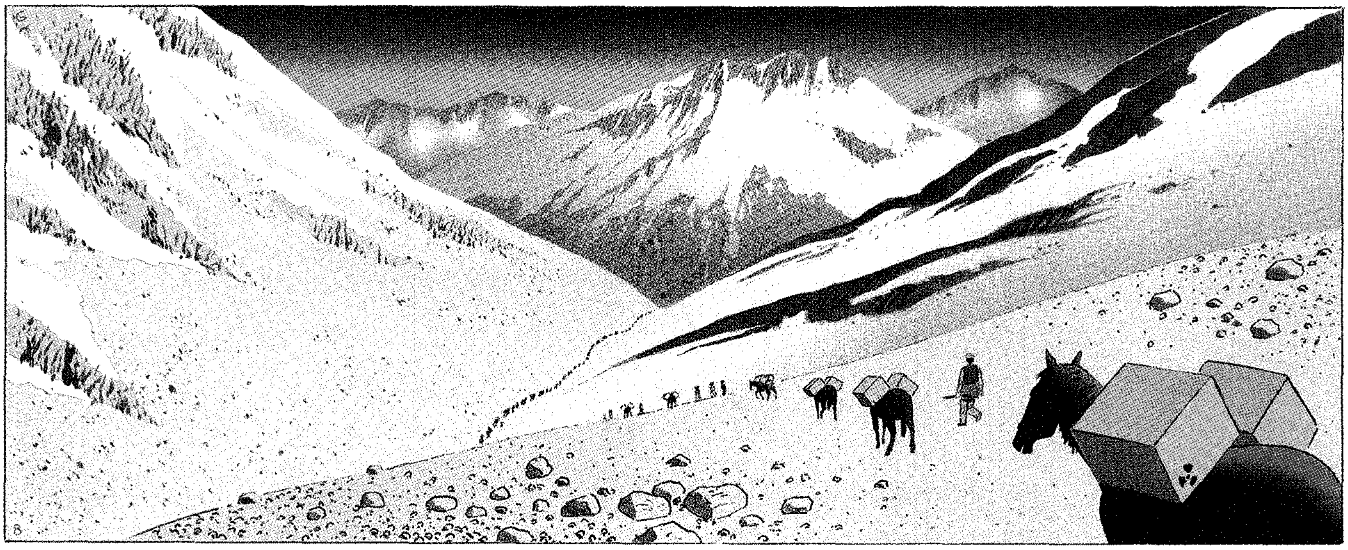
ANNALS OF NATIONAL SECURITY

THE DEAL

Why is Washington going easy on Pakistan's nuclear black marketers?

BY SEYMOUR M. HERSH



"What's on the market is absolutely horrendous," an official said. "It's a Mafia-type business, with corruption and secrecy."

GUY BILLOUT

On February 4th, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, who is revered in Pakistan as the father of the country's nuclear bomb, appeared on a state-run television network in Islamabad and confessed that he had been solely responsible for operating an international black market in nuclear-weapons materials. His confession was accepted by a stony-faced Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's President, who is a former Army general, and who dressed for the occasion in commando fatigues. The next day, on television again, Musharraf, who claimed to be shocked by Khan's misdeeds, nonetheless pardoned him, citing his service to Pakistan (he called Khan "my hero"). Musharraf told the *Times* that he had received a specific accounting of Khan's activities in Iran, North Korea, and Malaysia from the United States only last October. "If they knew earlier, they should have told us," he said. "Maybe a lot of things would not have happened."

It was a make-believe performance in a make-believe capital. In interviews last month in Islamabad, a planned city built four decades ago, politicians, diplomats, and nuclear experts dismissed the Khan confession and the Musharraf pardon with expressions of scorn and disbelief. For two decades, journalists and American and European intelligence agencies have linked Khan and the Pakistani intelligence service, the I.S.I. (Inter-Service Intelligence), to nuclear-technology transfers, and it was hard to credit the idea that the government Khan served had been oblivious. "It is state propaganda," Samina Ahmed, the director of the Islamabad office of the International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental organization that studies conflict resolution, told me. "The deal is that Khan doesn't tell what he knows. Everybody is lying. The tragedy of this whole affair is that it doesn't serve anybody's needs." Mushahid Hussain Sayed, who is a member of the Pakistani senate, said with a laugh, "America needed an offering to the gods—blood on the floor. Musharraf told A.Q., 'Bend over for a spanking.'"

A Bush Administration intelligence officer with years of experience in nonproliferation issues told me last month, "One thing we do know is that this was not a rogue operation. Suppose Edward Teller had suddenly decided to spread nuclear technology and equipment around the world. Do you really think he could do that without the government knowing? How do you get missiles from North Korea to Pakistan? Do you think A.Q. shipped all the centrifuges by Federal Express? The military has to be involved, at high levels." The intelligence officer went on, "We had every opportunity to put a stop to the A. Q. Khan network fifteen years ago. Some of those involved today in the smuggling are the children of those we knew about in the eighties. It's the second generation now."

In public, the Bush Administration accepted the pardon at face value. Within hours of Musharraf's television appearance, Richard Armitage, the Deputy Secretary of State, praised him as "the right man at the right time." Armitage added that Pakistan had been "very forthright in the last several years with us about proliferation." A White House spokesman said that the Administration valued Musharraf's assurances that "Pakistan was not involved in any of the proliferation activity." A State Department spokesman said that how to deal with Khan was "a matter for Pakistan to decide."

Musharraf, who seized power in a coup d'état in 1999, has been a major ally of the Bush Administration in the war on terrorism. According to past and present military and intelligence officials, however, Washington's support for the pardon of Khan was predicated on what Musharraf has agreed to do next: look the other way as the U.S. hunts for Osama bin Laden in a tribal area of northwest Pakistan dominated by the forbidding Hindu Kush mountain range, where he is believed to be operating. American commanders have been eager for permission to conduct major sweeps in the Hindu Kush for some time, and Musharraf has repeatedly refused them. Now, with Musharraf's agreement, the Administration has authorized a major spring offensive that will involve the movement of thousands of American troops.

Musharraf has proffered other help as well. A former senior intelligence official said to me, "Musharraf told us, 'We've got guys inside. The people who provide fresh fruits and vegetables and herd the goats' " for bin Laden and his Al Qaeda followers. "It's a quid pro quo: we're going to get our troops inside Pakistan in return for not forcing Musharraf to deal with Khan."

The spring offensive could diminish the tempo of American operations in Iraq. "It's going to be a full-court press," one Pentagon planner said. Some of the most highly skilled Special Forces units, such as Task Force 121, will be shifted from Iraq to Pakistan. Special Forces personnel around the world have been briefed on their new assignments, one military adviser told me, and in some cases have been given "warning orders"—the stage before being sent into combat.

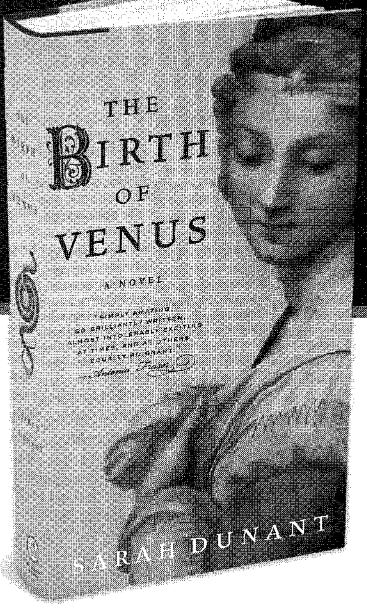
A large-scale American military presence in Pakistan could also create an uproar in the country and weaken Musharraf's already tenuous hold on power. The operation represents a tremendous gamble for him personally (he narrowly survived two assassination attempts in December) and, by extension, for the Bush Administration—if he fell, his successor might be far less friendly to the United States. One of Musharraf's most vocal critics inside Pakistan is retired Army Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, a fundamentalist Muslim who directed the I.S.I. from 1987 to 1989, at the height of the Afghan war with the Soviets. If American troops start operating from Pakistan, there will be "a rupture in the relationship," Gul told me. "Americans think others are slaves to them." Referring to the furor over A. Q. Khan, he added, "We may be in a jam, but we are a very honorable nation. We will not allow the American troops to come here. This will be the breaking point." If Musharraf has made an agreement about letting American troops operate in Pakistan, Gul said, "he's lying to you."

The greatest risk may be not to Musharraf, or to the stability of South Asia, but to the ability of the international nuclear monitoring institutions to do their work. Many experts fear that, with Khan's help, the world has moved closer to a nuclear tipping point. Husain Haqqani, who was a special assistant to three prime ministers before Musharraf came to power and is a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, noted, with some pride, that his nation had managed to make the bomb despite American sanctions. But now, he told me, Khan and his colleagues have gone wholesale: "Once they had the bomb, they had a shopping list of what to buy and where. A. Q. Khan can bring a plain piece of paper and show me how to get it done—the countries, people, and telephone numbers. 'This is the guy in Russia who can get you small quantities of enriched uranium. You in Malaysia will manufacture the stuff. Here's who will miniaturize the warhead. And then go to North Korea and get the damn missile.' " He added, "This is not a few scientists pocketing money and getting rich. It's a state policy."

Haqqani depicted Musharraf as truly "on the American side," in terms of resisting Islamic extremism, but, he said, "he doesn't know *how* to be on the American side. The same guys in the I.S.I. who have done this in the last twenty years he expects to be his partners. These are people who've done nothing but covert operations: One, screw India. Two, deceive America. Three, expand Pakistan's influence in the Islamic community. And, four, continue to spread nuclear technology." He paused. "Musharraf is trying to put out the fire with the help of the people who started the fire," he said.

"Much of this has been known for decades to the American intelligence community," Haqqani added. "Sometimes you know things and don't want to do anything about it. Americans need to know that your government is not only downplaying this but covering it up. You go to bed with our I.S.I. They know how to suck up to you. You let us get away with everything. Why can't you be more

"A BROAD MURAL BURSTING WITH COLOR, PASSION, AND INTRIGUE."
–*People*



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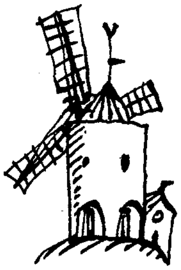
honest? There's no harm in telling us the truth—'Look, you're an ally but a very disturbing ally.' You have to nip some of these things in the bud."

The former senior American intelligence official was equally blunt. He told me, "Khan was willing to sell blueprints, centrifuges, and the latest in weaponry. He was the worst nuclear-arms proliferator in the world and he's pardoned—with not a squeak from the White House."

The most recent revelations about the nuclear black market were triggered by the National Council of Resistance of Iran, a now defunct opposition group that has served as the political wing of the People's Mujahideen Khalq, a group that has been on the State Department's list of terrorist organizations since 1997. The National Council lobbied in Washington for decades, and offered information—not always accurate—about Iran. There had been suspicions about Iran's nuclear intentions since the eighties, but the country's religious rulers claimed that its nuclear facilities were intended for peaceful purposes only. In August of 2002, the National Council came up with something new: it announced at a news conference in Washington that it had evidence showing that Iran had secretly constructed two extensive nuclear-weapons facilities in the desert south of Tehran. The two plants were described with impressive specificity. One, near Natanz, had been depicted by Iranian officials as part of a desert-eradication program. The site, surrounded by barbed wire, was said to include two work areas buried twenty-five feet underground and ringed by concrete walls more than eight feet thick. The second plant, which was said to be producing heavy water for use in making weapons-grade plutonium, was situated in Arak and ostensibly operated as an energy company.



Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the organization that monitors nuclear proliferation, eventually followed up on the National Council's information. And it checked out.

A building that I.A.E.A. inspectors were not able to gain full access to on a visit in March, 2003, was found on a subsequent trip to contain a centrifuge facility behind a wall made of boxes. Inspectors later determined that some of the centrifuges had been supplied by Pakistan. They also found traces of highly enriched uranium on centrifuge components manufactured in Iran and Pakistan. The I.A.E.A. has yet to determine whether the uranium originated in Pakistan: the enriched materials could have come from the black market, or from a nuclear proliferator yet to be discovered, or from the Iranians' own production facilities.

Last October, the Iranian government, after nine months of denials and obfuscation—and increasingly productive inspections—formally acknowledged to the I.A.E.A. that it had secretly been producing small quantities of enriched uranium and plutonium, and had been operating a pilot heavy-water reactor program, all potentially in violation of its obligations under the nuclear-nonproliferation treaty. Some of the secret programs, Iran admitted, dated back eighteen years. At first, the country's religious leadership claimed that its scientists had worked on their own, and not with the help of outside suppliers. The ayatollahs later admitted that this was not the case, but refused to say where the help had come from.

Iran's leaders continued to insist that their goal was to produce nuclear energy, not nuclear weapons, and, in a public report last November, the I.A.E.A. stopped short of accusing them of building a bomb. Cautiously, it stated, "It is clear that Iran has failed in a number of instances over an extended period of time to meet its obligations . . . with respect to the reporting of nuclear material and its processing and use. . . . To date, there is no evidence that the previously undeclared nuclear material and activities referred to above were related to a nuclear weapons programme."

Privately, however, senior proliferation experts were far less reserved. "I know what they did," one official in Vienna told me, speaking of the Iranians. "They've been lying all the time and they've been cheating all the time." Asked if he thought that Iran now has the bomb, the official said no. Asked if he thought that Iran had enough enriched uranium to make a bomb, he said, "I'm not sure."

Musharraf has insisted that any dealings between A. Q. Khan and Iran were independent of, and unknown to, the Pakistani government. But there is evidence to contradict him. On a trip to the Middle East last month, I was told that a number of years ago the Israeli signals-intelligence agency, known as Unit 8200, broke a sophisticated Iranian code and began monitoring communications that included talk between Iran and Pakistan about Iran's burgeoning nuclear-weapons program. The Israeli intelligence community has many covert contacts inside Iran, stemming from the strong ties it had there before the overthrow of the Shah, in 1979; some of these ties still exist. Israeli intelligence also maintained close contact with many Iranian opposition groups, such as the National Council. A connection was made—directly or indirectly—and the Israeli intelligence about Iran's nuclear program reached the National Council. A senior I.A.E.A. official subsequently told me that he knew that the Council's information had originated with Israeli intelligence, but he refused to say where he had learned that fact. (An Israeli diplomat in Washington, asked to comment, said, "Why would we work with a Mickey Mouse outlet like the Council?")

The Israeli intercepts have been shared, in some form, with the United States intelligence community, according to the former senior intelligence official, and they show that high-level officials in Islamabad and Tehran had frequent conversations about the I.A.E.A. investigation and its implications. "The interpretation is the issue here," the former official said. "If you set the buzzwords aside, the substance is that the Iranians were saying, 'We've got to play with the I.A.E.A. We don't want to blow our cover, but we have to show some movement. There's no way we're going against world public opinion—no way. We've got to show that we're coöperating and get the Europeans on our side.' " (At the time, Iran was engaged in negotiations with the European Union on trade and other issues.) It's clear from the intercepts, however, the former intelligence official said, that Iran did not want to

SOME THINGS, SAY THE WISE ONES

Some things, say the wise ones who know everything,
are not living. I say,
You live your life your way and leave me alone.

I have talked with the faint clouds in the sky when they
are afraid of being left behind; I have said, Hurry, hurry!
and they have said, Thank you, we are hurrying.

About cows, and starfish, and roses there is no
argument. They die, after all.

But water is a question, so many living things in it,
but what is it itself, living or not? Oh, gleaming

generosity, how can they write you out?

As I think this I am sitting on the sand beside
the harbor. I am holding in my hand
small pieces of granite, pyrite, schist.
Each one, just now, so thoroughly asleep.

—*Mary Oliver*

give up its nuclear potential. The Pakistani response, he added, was "Don't give away the whole ballgame and we'll look out for you." There was a further message from Pakistan, the former official said: "Look out for your own interests."

In the official's opinion, Pakistan and Iran have survived the crisis: "They both did what they said they'd do, and neither one has been hurt. No one has been damaged. The public story is still that Iran never really got there—which is bullshit." And analysts throughout the American intelligence community, he said, are asking, "How could it be that Pakistan's done all these things—developed a second generation of miniaturized and boosted weapons—and yet the investigation has been shorted to ground?"

A high-level intelligence officer who has access to the secret Iran-Pakistan exchanges told me that he understood that "the Pakistanis were very worried that the Iranians would give their name to the I.A.E.A." The officer, interviewed in Tel Aviv, told me that Israel remains convinced that "the Iranians do not intend to give up the bomb. What Iran did was report to the I.A.E.A. the information that was already out in the open and which they cannot protect. There is much that is not exposed." Israeli intelligence, he added, continues to see digging and other nuclear-related underground activity in Iran. A nonproliferation official based in Vienna later explained that Iran has bored two holes near a uranium-mining operation that are "deep enough to do a test"—as deep as two hundred metres. The design of the bomb that could be tested, he added, if Iran chose to do so, came from Libya, via Pakistan and A. Q. Khan.

Last December, President Bush and Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, jointly announced that Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan leader, had decided to give up his nuclear-weapons program and would permit I.A.E.A. inspectors to enter his country. The surprise announcement, the culmination of nine months of secret talks, was followed immediately by a six-day inspection by the I.A.E.A., the first of many inspections, and the public unveiling, early this year, of the role of yet another country, Malaysia, in the nuclear black market. Libya had been able to purchase hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of nuclear parts, including advanced centrifuges designed in Pakistan, from a firm in Malaysia, with a free-trade zone in Dubai serving as the main shipping point. It was a new development in an old arms race: Malaysia, a high-tech nation with no indigenous nuclear ambitions, was retailing sophisticated nuclear gear, based on designs made available by Khan.

The centrifuge materials that the inspectors found in Libya had not been assembled—in most cases, in fact, the goods were still in their shipping cases. "I am not impressed by what I've seen," a senior nonproliferation official told me. "It was not a well-developed program—not a serious research-and-development approach to make use of what they bought. It was useless. But I was absolutely struck by what the Libyans were able to buy. What's on the market is absolutely horrendous. It's a Mafia-type business, with corruption and secrecy."

I.A.E.A. inspectors, to their dismay, even found in Libya precise blueprints for the design and construction of a half-ton nuclear weapon. "It's a sweet little bomb, put together by engineers who know how to assemble a weapon," an official in Vienna told me. "No question it'll work. Just dig a hole and test it. It's too big and too heavy for a Scud, but it'll go into a family car. It's a terrorist's dream."

In a speech on February 5th at Georgetown University, George Tenet, the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, hailed the developments in Libya as an American intelligence coup. Tenet said, "We learned of all this through the powerful combination of technical intelligence, careful and painstaking analytic work, operational daring, and, yes, the classic kind of human intelligence that people have led you to believe we no longer have." The C.I.A. unquestionably has many highly motivated and highly skilled agents. But interviews with former C.I.A. officials and with two men who worked closely with Libyan intelligence present a different story.

Qaddafi had been seeking a reconciliation with the West for years, with limited success. Then, a former C.I.A. operations officer told me, Musa Kusa, the longtime head of Libyan intelligence, urged Qaddafi to meet with Western intelligence agencies and open up his weapons arsenal to international inspection. The C.I.A. man quoted Kusa as explaining that, as the war with Iraq drew near, he had warned Qaddafi, "You are nuts if you think you can defeat the United States. Get out of it now. Surrender now and hope they accept your surrender."

One Arab intelligence operative told me that Libyan intelligence, with Qaddafi's approval, then quickly offered to give American and British intelligence details about a centrifuge deal that was already under way. The parts were due to be shipped aboard a German freighter, the B.B.C. China. In October, the freighter was seized, and the incident was proclaimed a major intelligence success. But, the operative said, it was "the Libyans who blew up the Pakistanis," and who made the role of Khan's black market known. The Americans, he said, asked "questions about those orders and Libya said it had them." It was, in essence, a sting, and was perceived that way by Musharraf. He was enraged by what he called, in a nationally televised speech last month—delivered in Urdu, and not officially translated by the Pakistani government—the betrayal of Pakistan by his "Muslim brothers" in both Libya and Iran. There was little loyalty between seller and buyer. "The Pakistanis took a lot of Libya's money and gave second-grade plans," the Arab intelligence operative said. "It was half-hearted."

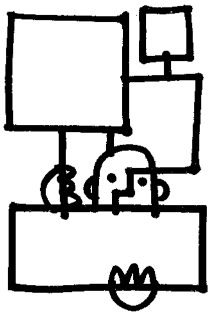
The intelligence operative went on, "Qaddafi is very pragmatic and studied the timing. It was the right time. The United States wanted to have a success story, and he banked on that."

Because of the ongoing investigation into Khan and his nuclear-proliferation activities, the I.A.E.A.'s visibility and credibility have grown. The key issue, Mohamed ElBaradei, the director-general of the I.A.E.A., told me, in an interview at the organization's headquarters in Vienna, is non-state actors. "I have a nightmare that the spread of enriched uranium and nuclear material could result in the operation of a small enrichment facility in a place like northern Afghanistan," he said. "Who knows? It's not hard for a non-state to hide, especially if there is a state in collusion with it. Some of these non-state groups are very sophisticated."

Many diplomats in Vienna expressed frustration at the I.A.E.A.'s inability, thanks to Musharraf's pardon, to gain access to Khan. "It's not going to happen," one diplomat said. "We are getting some coöperation from Pakistan, but it's the *names* we need to know. 'Who got the stuff?' We're interested to know whether other nations that we're supposed to supervise have the stuff." The diplomat told me he believed that the United States was unwilling to publicly state the obvious: that there was no way the Pakistani government didn't know about the transfers. He said, "Of course it looks awful, but Musharraf will be indebted to you."

The I.A.E.A.'s authority to conduct inspections is limited. The nations that have signed the nonproliferation treaty are required to permit systematic I.A.E.A. inspections of their declared nuclear facilities for research and energy production. But there is no mechanism for the inspection of suspected nuclear-weapons sites, and many at the I.A.E.A. believe that the treaty must be modified. "There is a nuclear network of black-market centrifuges and weapons design that the world has yet to discover," a diplomat in Vienna told me. In the past, he said, the I.A.E.A. had worked under the assumption that nations would cheat on the nonproliferation treaty "to produce and sell their own nuclear material." He said, "What we have instead is a black-market network capable of producing usable nuclear materials and nuclear devices that is not limited to any one nation. We have nuclear dealers operating outside our front door, and we have no control over them—no matter how good we are in terms of verification." There would be no need, in other words, for A. Q. Khan or anyone else in Pakistan to have a direct role in supplying nuclear technology. The most sensitive nuclear equipment would be available to any country—or any person or group, presumably—that had enough cash.

"This is a question of survival," the diplomat said, with a caustic smile. He added, "Iraq is laughable in comparison with this issue. The Bush Administration was hunting the shadows instead of the prey."



Another nonproliferation official depicted the challenge facing the I.A.E.A. inspection regime as "a seismic shift—the globalization of the nuclear world." The official said, "We have to move from inspecting declared sites to 'Where does this shit come from?' If we stay focussed on the declared, we miss the nuclear supply matrix." At this point, the international official asked me, in all seriousness, "Why hasn't A. Q. Khan been taken out by Israel or the United States?"

After Pakistan's role in providing nuclear aid to Iran and Libya was revealed, Musharraf insisted once again, this time at the World Economic Forum, in Davos, Switzerland, in January, that he would not permit American troops to search for Al Qaeda members inside Pakistan. "That is not a possibility at all," he said. "It is a very sensitive issue. There is no room for any foreign elements coming and assisting us. We don't need any assistance."

Nonetheless, a senior Pentagon adviser told me in mid-February, the spring offensive is on. "We're entering a huge period of transition in Iraq," the adviser said, referring to the coming changeover of forces, with many of the experienced regular Army combat units being replaced by National Guard and Army Reserve units. "We will not be conducting a lot of ops, and so you redirect and exploit somewhere else."

The operation, American officials said, is scheduled to involve the redeployment to South Asia of thousands of American soldiers, including members of Task Force 121. The logistical buildup began in mid-February, as more than a dozen American C-17 cargo planes began daily flights, hauling helicopters, vehicles, and other equipment to military bases in Pakistan. Small teams of American Special Forces units have been stationed at the Shahbaz airbase, in northwestern Pakistan, since the beginning of the Afghanistan war, in the fall of 2001.

The senior Pentagon adviser, like other military and intelligence officials I talked to, was cautious about the chances of getting what the White House wants—Osama bin Laden. “It’s anybody’s guess,” he said, adding that Ops Sec—operational security—for the planned offensive was poor. The former senior intelligence official similarly noted that there was concern inside the Joint Special Operations Command, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, over the reliability of intercepted Al Qaeda telephone calls. “What about deception?” he said. “These guys are not dumb, and once the logistical aircraft begin to appear”—the American C-17s landing every night at an airbase in Pakistan—“you know something is going on.”

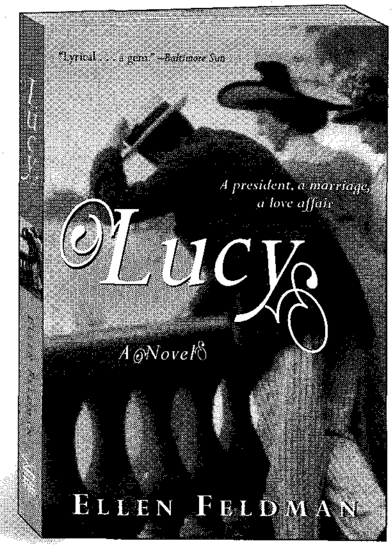
“We’ve got to get Osama bin Laden, and we know where he is,” the former senior intelligence official said. Osama bin Laden is “communicating through SIGINT”—talking on satellite telephones and the like—“and his wings have been clipped. He’s in his own Alamo in northern Pakistan. It’s a natural progress—whittling down alternative locations and then targeting him. This is not, in theory, a ‘Let’s go and hope’ kind of thing. They’ve seen what they think is him.” But the former official added that there were reasons to be cautious about such reports, especially given that bin Laden hasn’t been seen for so long. Bin Laden would stand out because of his height; he is six feet five. But the target area is adjacent to Swat Valley, which is populated by a tribe of exceptionally tall people.

Two former C.I.A. operatives with firsthand knowledge of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas said that the American assault, if it did take place, would confront enormous logistical problems. “It’s impenetrable,” said Robert Baer, who visited the Hindu Kush area in the early nineties, before he was assigned to lead the C.I.A.’s anti-Saddam operations in northern Iraq. “There are no roads, and you can’t get armor up there. This is where Alexander the Great lost an entire division. The Russians didn’t even bother to go up there. Everybody’s got a gun. That area is worse than Iraq.” Milton Bearden, who ran the C.I.A.’s operations in Afghanistan during the war with the Soviet Union, recounted, “I’ve been all through there. The Pashtun population in that belt has lived there longer than almost any other ethnic group has lived anywhere on earth.” He said, “Our intelligence has got to be better than it’s been. Anytime we go into something driven entirely by electoral politics, it doesn’t work out.”

One American intelligence consultant noted that American forces in Afghanistan have crossed into Pakistan in “hot pursuit” of Al Qaeda suspects in previous operations, with no complaints from the Pakistani leadership. If the American forces strike quickly and decisively against bin Laden from within Pakistan, he added, “Musharraf could say he gave no advance authorization. We can move in with so much force and firepower—with so much shock and awe—that we will be too fast for him.” The consultant said, “The question is, how deep into Pakistan can we pursue him?” He added, “Musharraf is in a very tough position.”

At home, Musharraf is in more danger than ever over his handling of the nuclear affair. “He’s opened up Pandora’s box, and he will never be able to manage it,” Chaudry Nisar Ali Khan, a former government minister who now heads an opposition party, said. “Pakistani public opinion feels that A.Q. has been made a scapegoat, and international opinion thinks he’s a threat. This is a no-win situation for Musharraf. The average man feels that there will be a nuclear rollback, and Pakistan’s immediate deterrent will be taken away. It comes down to an absolute disaster for Musharraf.”

Robert Gallucci, a former United Nations weapons inspector who is now dean of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, calls A. Q. Khan “the Johnny Appleseed” of the nuclear-arms race. Gallucci, who is a consultant to the C.I.A. on proliferation issues, told me, “Bad as it is with Iran, North Korea, and Libya having nuclear-weapons material, the worst part is that they could transfer it to a non-state group. That’s the biggest concern, and the scariest thing about all this—that Pakistan could work with the worst terrorist groups on earth to build nuclear weapons. There’s nothing more important than stopping terrorist groups from getting nuclear weapons. The most dangerous country for the United States now is Pakistan, and second is Iran.” Gallucci went on, “We haven’t been this vulnerable since the British burned Washington in 1814.” ◆



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CASUAL

MY AMENDMENT

BY GEORGE SAUNDERS

As an obscure, middle-aged, heterosexual short-story writer, I am often asked, George, do you have any feelings about Same-Sex Marriage?

To which I answer, Actually, yes, I do.

Like any sane person, I am against Same-Sex Marriage, and in favor of a constitutional amendment to ban it.

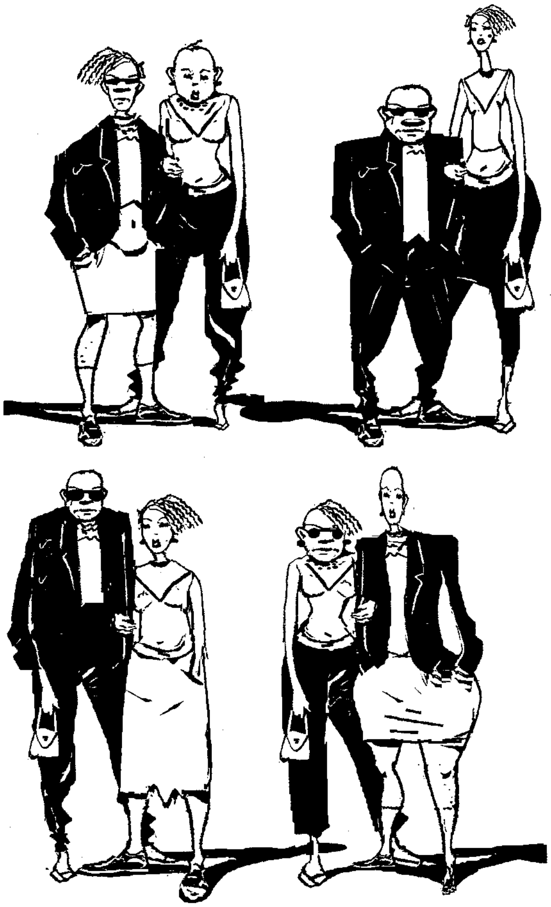
To tell the truth, I feel that, in the interest of moral rigor, it is necessary for us to go a step further, which is why I would like to propose a supplementary constitutional amendment.

In the town where I live, I have frequently observed a phenomenon I have come to think of as Samish-Sex Marriage. Take, for example, K, a male friend of mine, of slight build, with a ponytail. K is married to S, a tall, stocky female with extremely short hair, almost a crewcut. Often, while watching K play with his own ponytail as S towers over him, I have wondered, Isn't it odd that this somewhat effeminate man should be married to this somewhat masculine woman? Is K not, on some level, imperfectly expressing a slight latent desire to be married to a man? And is not S, on some level, imperfectly expressing a slight latent desire to be married to a woman?

Then I ask myself, Is this truly what God had in mind?

Take the case of L, a female friend with a deep, booming voice. I have often found myself looking askance at her husband, H. Though H is basically pretty masculine, having neither a ponytail nor a tight feminine derrière like K, still I wonder: H, when you are having marital relations with L, and she calls out your name in that deep, booming, nearly male voice, and you continue having marital relations with her (i.e., you are not "turned off"), does this not imply that you, H, are, in fact, still "turned on"? And doesn't this indicate that, on some level, you, H, have a slight latent desire to make love to a man?

Or consider the case of T, a male friend with an extremely small penis. (We attend the same gym.) He is married to O, an average-looking woman who knows how to fix cars. I wonder about O. How does she know so much about cars? Is she not, by tolerating this non-car-fixing, short-penised friend of mine, indicating that, on some level, she wouldn't mind being married to a woman, and is therefore, perhaps, a tiny bit functionally gay?



And what about T? Doesn't the fact that T can stand there in the shower room at our gym, confidently towelling off his tiny unit, while O is at home changing their sparkplugs with alacrity, indicate that it is only a short stroll down a slippery slope before he is completely happy being the "girl" in their relationship, from which it is only a small fey hop down the same slope before T is happily married to another man, perhaps my car mechanic, a handsome Portuguese fellow I shall refer to as J?

Because my feeling is, when God made man and woman He had something very specific in mind. It goes without saying that He did not want men marrying men, or women marrying women, but also what He did not want, in my view, was feminine men marrying masculine women.

Which is why I developed my Manly Scale of Absolute Gender.

Using my Scale, which assigns numerical values according to a set of masculine and feminine characteristics, it is now easy to determine how Manly a man is and how Fem a woman is, and therefore how close to a Samish-Sex Marriage a given marriage is.

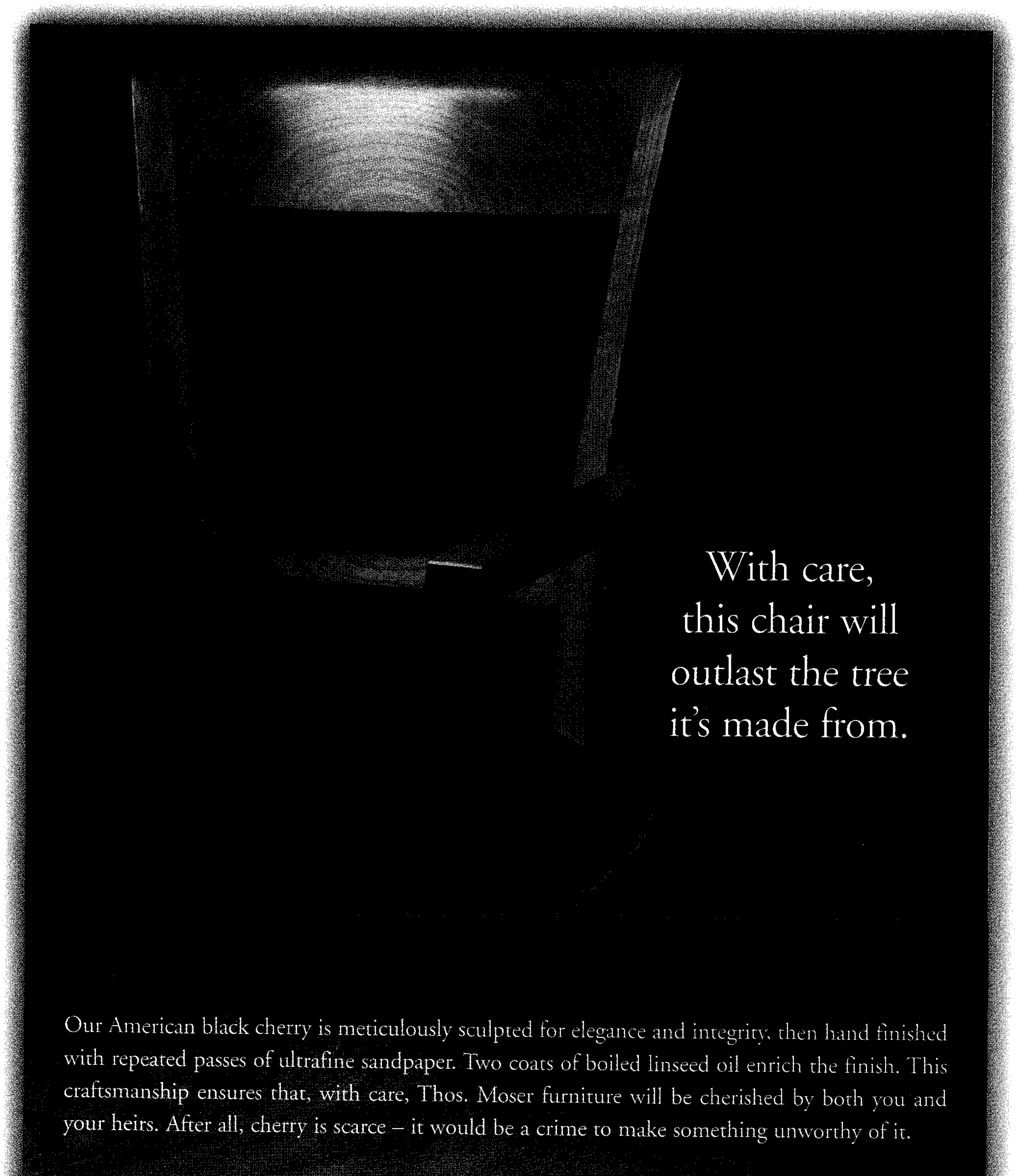
Here's how it works. Say we determine that a man is an 8 on the Manly Scale, with 10 being the most Manly of all and 0 basically a Neuter. And say we determine that his fiancée is a −6 on the Manly Scale, with a −10 being the most Fem of all. Calculating the difference between the man's rating and the woman's rating—the Gender Differential—we see that this proposed union is not, in fact, a Samish-Sex Marriage, which I have defined as "any marriage for which the Gender Differential is less than or equal to 10 points."

Friends whom I have identified as being in Samish-Sex Marriages often ask me, George, given that we have scored poorly, what exactly would you have us do about it?

Well, one solution I have proposed is divorce—divorce followed by remarriage to a more suitable partner. K, for example, could marry a voluptuous high-voiced N.F.L. cheerleader, who would more than offset his tight feminine derrière, while his ex-wife, S, might choose to become involved with a lumberjack with very large arms, thereby neutralizing her thick calves and faint mustache.

ISTVAN BANYAI

Another, and of course preferable, so-



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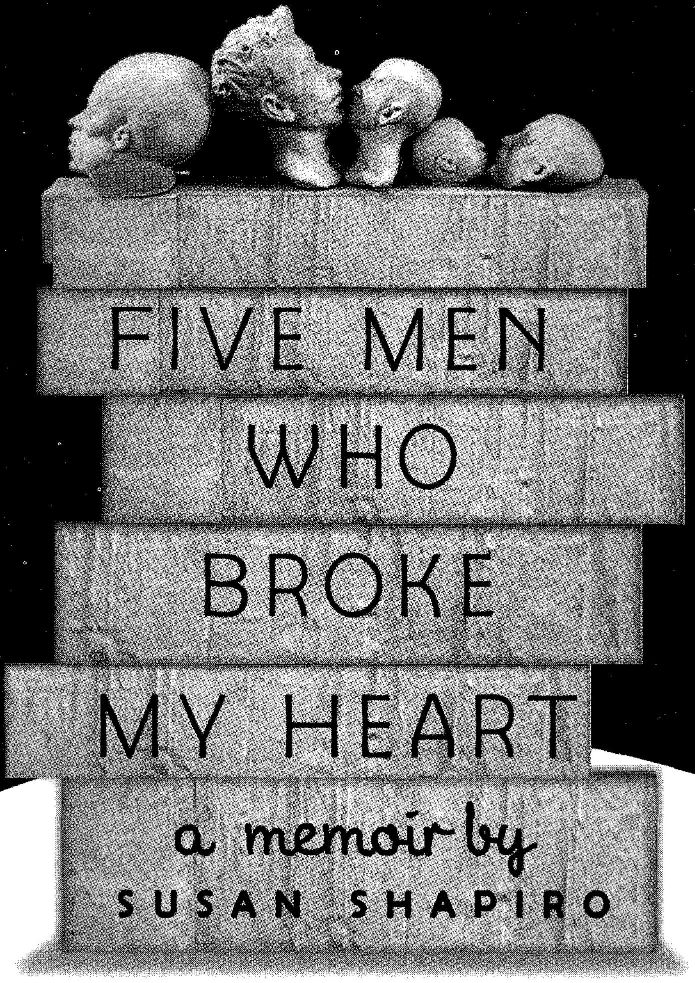

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lution would be to repair the existing marriage, converting it from a Samish-Sex Marriage to a healthy Normal Marriage, by having the feminine man become more masculine and/or the masculine woman become more feminine.

Often, when I propose this, my friends become surly. How dare I, they ask. What business is it of mine? Do I think it is easy to change in such a profound way?

To which I say, It is not easy to change, but it is possible.

I know, because I have done it.

When young, I had a tendency to speak too quickly, while gesturing too much with my hands. Also, my opinions were unfirm. I was constantly contradicting myself in that fast voice, while gesturing like a girl. Also, I cried often. Things seemed so sad. I had long blond hair, and liked it. My hair was layered and fell down across my shoulders, and, I admit it, I would sometimes slow down when passing a shopwindow to look at it, to look at my hair! I had a strange constant feeling of being happy to be alive. This feeling of infinite possibility sometimes caused me to laugh when alone, or even, on occasion, to literally skip down the street, before pausing in front of a shopwindow and giving my beautiful hair a cavalier toss.

To tell the truth, I do not think I would have scored very high on my Manly Scale, if the Scale had been invented at that time, by me. I suspect I would have scored so Fem on the test that I would have been prohibited from marrying my wife, P, the love of my life. And I think, somewhere in my heart, I knew that.

I knew I was too Fem.

So what did I do about it? Did I complain? Did I whine? Did I expect activist judges to step in on my behalf, manipulating the system to accommodate my peculiarity?

No, I did not.

What I did was I changed. I undertook what I like to think of as a classic American project of self-improvement. I made videos of myself talking, and studied these, and in time succeeded in training myself to speak more slowly, while almost never moving my hands. Now, if you ever meet me, you will observe that I always speak in an extremely slow and manly and almost painfully deliberate way, with my hands either driven deep into my pockets or held stock-still at the ends of my arms, which are bent slightly at the elbows, as if I were ready to respond to the slightest provocation by punching you in the face. As for my opinions, they are very firm. I rarely change them. When I feel like skipping, I absolutely do not skip. As for my long beautiful hair—well, I am lucky, in that I am rapidly going bald. Every month, when I recalculate my ranking on the Manly Scale, I find myself becoming more and more Manly, as my hair gets thinner and my girth increases, thickening my once lithe, almost girlish physique, thus insuring the continuing morality and legality of my marriage to P.

My point is simply this: If I was able to effect these tremendous positive changes in my life, to avoid finding myself in the moral/legal quagmire of a Samish-Sex Marriage, why can't K, S, L, H, T, and O do the same?

I implore any of my readers who find themselves in a Samish-Sex Marriage: Change. If you are a feminine man, become more manly. If you are a masculine woman, become more feminine. If you are a woman and are thick-necked or lumbering, or have ever had the slightest feeling of attraction to a man who is somewhat pale and fey, deny these feelings and, in a spirit of self-correction, try to become more thin-necked and light-footed, while, if you find it helpful, watching videos of naked masculine men, to sort of retrain yourself in the proper mode of attraction. If you are a man and, upon seeing a thick-waisted, athletic young woman walking with a quasi-mannish gait through your local grocery, you imagine yourself in a passionate embrace with her, in your car, a car that is parked just outside, and which is suddenly, in your imagination, full of the smell of her fresh young breath—well, stop thinking that! Are you a man or not?

I, for one, am sick and tired of this creeping national tendency to let certain types of people take advantage of our national good nature by marrying individuals who are essentially of their own gender. If this trend continues, before long our towns and cities will be full of people like K, S, L, H, T, and O, people "asserting their rights" by dating, falling in love with, marrying, and spending the rest of their lives with whomever they please.

I, for one, am not about to stand by and let that happen.

Because then what will we have? A nation ruled by the anarchy of unconstrained desire. A nation of willful human hearts, each lurching this way and that and reaching out for whatever it spontaneously desires, trying desperately to find some comforting temporary shred of warmth in a mostly cold world, totally unconcerned about the external form in which that other, long-desired heart is embodied.

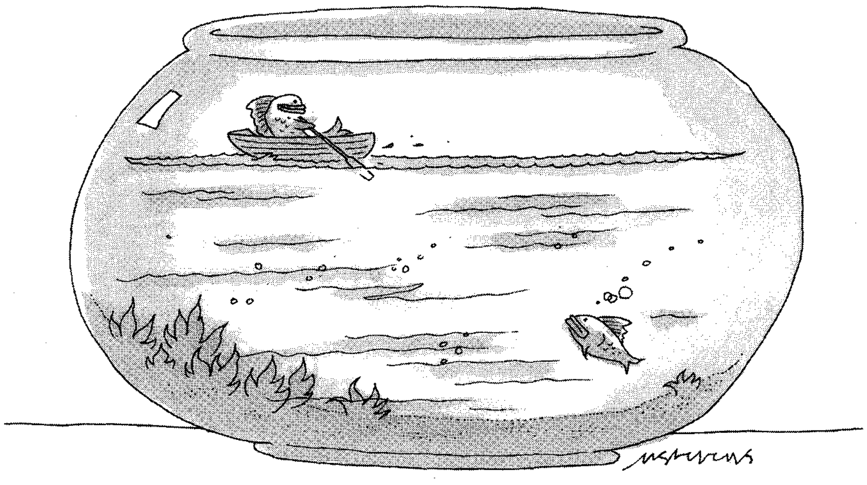
That is not the kind of world in which I wish to live.

I, for one, intend to become ever more firmly male, enjoying my golden years, while watching P become ever more female, each of us vigilant for any hint of ambiguity in the other.

And as our children grow, should they begin to show the slightest hint of some lingering residue of the opposite gender, P and I will lovingly pull them aside and list all the particulars by which we were able to identify their unintentional deficiency.

Then, together, we will devise a suitable correction.

And, in this way, the race will go on. ♦



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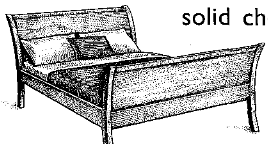

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THE SPORTING SCENE

BE LIKE DEE

How Diana Taurasi dominated college basketball.

BY KEVIN CONLEY

The most identifiable profile in the state of Connecticut—big nose, big grin, long brown hair pulled back in a bun, which you can spot bouncing up the court from any seat in the Hartford Civic Center—belongs to Diana Taurasi, who plays basketball for the University of Connecticut Huskies. Since she joined the Huskies, three and a half years ago, the team has won a hundred and thirty games, two of them for the national championship, and lost only six. Last March, after she scored thirty-five points against the Texas Christian Lady Frogs in the N.C.A.A. tournament, UConn's head coach, Geno Auriemma, explained what set the Huskies apart: "We got Diana. And you don't."

Taurasi—Dee to her teammates—is built for basketball (six feet, a hundred and seventy pounds, with long arms for snatching rebounds and long, graceful fingers for feathering shots), and she excels at each of the game's usually incompatible specialties (pass, shoot, block, steal, rebound). She won last year's Naismith Award for the country's best female collegiate player; she ranks in the top ten in the Big East in eight of twelve statistical categories. But what makes her the best college basketball player ever, and the most sought-after prospect in the seven-year history of the W.N.B.A., are two unmeasurable but highly marketable qualities: her playground joy in the game and her last-minute dominance. Nobody looks happier out there. Nobody is harder to beat.

That such a talent wound up in Connecticut is no accident. The team leads the nation in attendance; its entire schedule is televised, on the networks or on Connecticut Public Television; fifteen daily newspapers in the state cover nearly every game. After eighteen years on the job, Geno Auriemma is the highest-paid coach in women's college basketball, at more than six hundred thousand dollars a year, and the key figure in a sports program that the UConn president, Philip Austin, credited with bringing the university more than a billion dollars for capital improvement. The Connecticut state legislature passed the appropriation bill—the largest for any public university in the nation—just two months after the Huskies' first national championship, in 1995. This year, the team seems well positioned to win its third straight championship, even after two losses in January, to Duke and Notre Dame, exposed the team's overreliance on Taurasi.

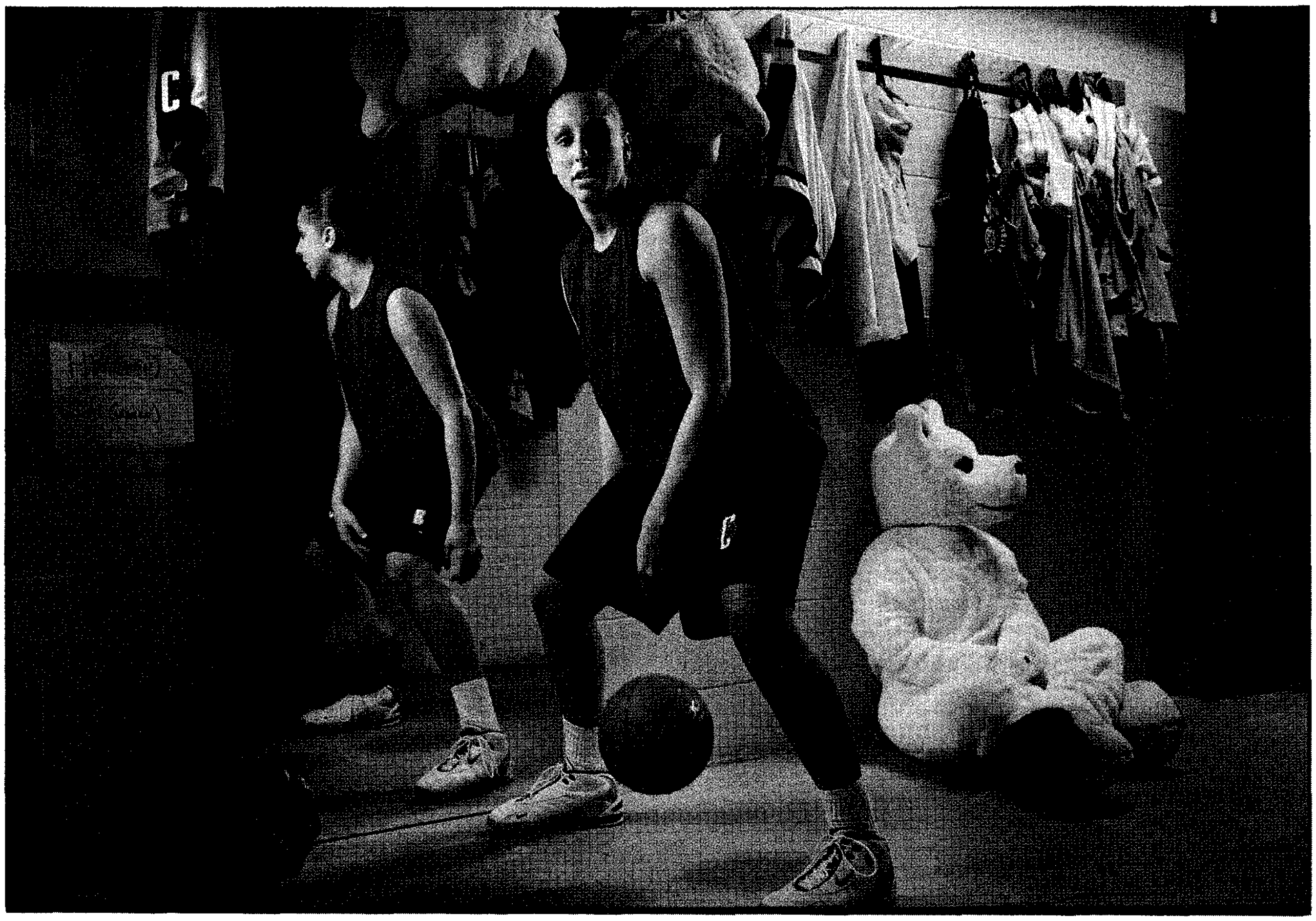
It's in the close contests with the team's strongest rivals, like the University of Tennessee Lady Vols (which, with UConn, account for seven of the past nine national championships), that you see how good Taurasi really is. In her junior year, in a nationally televised matchup with the Lady Vols in January, 2003, with 6.9 seconds left and UConn behind, 56–53, Taurasi hit a three-point shot—running to her left and falling sideways—to send the game into overtime. Then she hit the game winner. Surprisingly, nobody really talks about those shots. Instead, they talk about the one that ended the first half. With four seconds to go, Taurasi caught the ball, bounced it twice, and knocked in a seventy-footer, arcing over three-quarters of the court. Usually, players faced with such a shot heave the ball in desperation; in the replays Taurasi's footwork looks a little more forceful than usual—a two-steps-and-lean sequence—but above the waist she simply squares up and takes her normal shot, arms high, ball sent off with a snap of the wrist in a classic "bye-bye, now" follow-through. The casual-looking shot sails through the basket without touching the rim. Over on the UConn bench, Auriemma keeps his hands on his hips, as if nothing had happened, but his associate head coach, Chris Dailey, shouts "Oh, my God!" and bursts out laughing.

When Taurasi decides to score, she does it so easily that you have to wonder why she doesn't score more. Her signature shot is the three-pointer. Everybody knows it's coming, but she can shoot it from so far behind the line—practically from Globetrotter range—that it still surprises people. Most three-point shooters are specialists, finicky smaller players who skulk at the edges of the play, waiting for the ball to bounce their way. For Taurasi, the long shot is just one option in her scoring attack. If a defender comes up to stop it, she's fast enough to slip past to a suddenly open spot for her bunny-kick midrange jumper; she's smooth enough to slice inside for finesse shots like the finger roll or the left-hand fallaway; and she's strong enough to go for the rough stuff, banging up in the air, seeking contact with the biggest bodies on the other team, holding the ball high, keep-away style, or hanging on to it until she finally hears a whistle and lets go with the and-one banker—a regular basket plus a foul shot—the conventional three.

Scoring in basketball is usually an individual act based on simple logic: if you do A, then I do B. Passing is based on complicated contingencies: if I do this and she goes there, and they try that—and they will—then this pass now, or the other one next time, will hit her or *her* where they like to go. Taurasi is an exceptional scorer, but an even better passer, and her quick reads of the chaos on court can be startling, even funny. In this respect, she's like her childhood hero, Magic Johnson. "It's not that I don't like scoring—sometimes you need a big bucket, you know, make a big play," Diana said to me. "But passing—it's just fun. It's a way you can affect the game without dominating the ball. It just makes your teammates better. Set them up. Make them feel good."

On or off the court, Taurasi controls the flow. "Who are these bums?" she said as she backslapped her way through the assembled press early this season. "I ain't talking to you." The reporters were charmed by her good spirits and her ease, but the message was clear: My stage, my terms. Taurasi has met Michael Jordan a few times and finds it hard not to challenge him. When she was sixteen, Jordan came to a basketball camp she was attending in Santa Barbara, and when Taurasi got to the head of the autograph line he recognized her. "Hey, I hear you're pretty good," he said, and when she nodded he asked, "Well, how good are you?"

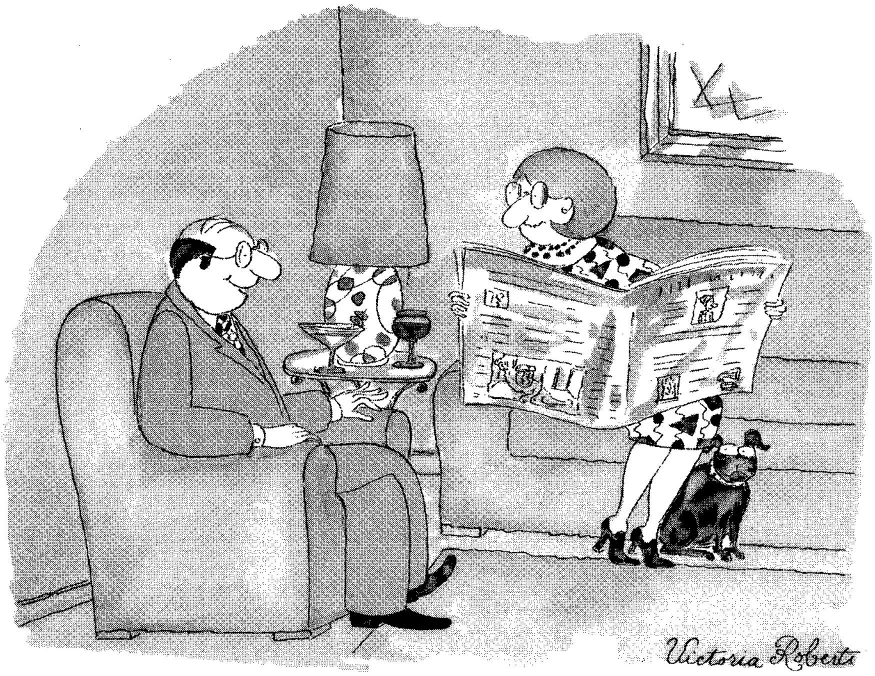
"Let's get a ball," she said.



"If we do it right, you're going to be the best player that's ever played," UConn's coach told Taurasi. Photograph by Martin Schoeller.

CORBIS SABA

Don Antonio Lugo High School is half a block from Taurasi's childhood home, in Chino, California. The gym floor has been upgraded in the four years since she played there—a real wood floor has replaced the old rubber floor, which made for funny bounces. In early December, on a day when UConn was scheduled to play Pepperdine, in Santa Monica, fifty miles away, basketball practice was cancelled so that the girls' squad could make the drive out to see the school's most famous alumna play. The current coach, finishing up her last hour



"If I ever say anything I haven't said already, let me know."

of class before she headed across the Los Angeles highwayscape, pulled a game program from Diana's sophomore year out of her bag. It listed Taurasi's hobbies—"Jerry Springer," fishing—and her future goal: to play in the W.N.B.A.

The hobbies, at least, were a joke. "I've never gone fishing in my life," Taurasi told me. "My point guard never baked cookies, either, but she said she baked cookies."

Chino is a former farming town with ranch houses and gated communities quickly replacing pastureland. When Taurasi started playing, Don Lugo was hardly a basketball powerhouse. A list of her former teammates sounds like a sitcom pitch: she played alongside her older sister, Jessika; Mindy Haarlammert, the daughter of her dad's boss (who was Taurasi's first coach); and a center, Crystal Baird, who preferred riding horses to shooting hoops. "My first varsity game, I'm running down the court, being stupid, not paying attention," Baird, who now plays for the University of Montana, told a reporter. "And Dee launches a pass that hits me right on the side of the face. She does it deliberately. As we're going back upcourt, she says to me, 'Next time, be looking for it.' "

At Pepperdine that evening, Diana's mother, Liliana, who waitresses at a Sizzler, kept getting up to hug old friends. A few relatives away, Diana's father, Mario, who works at a machine shop in Fullerton, fabricating airplane parts, sat hunched in his leather jacket, talking quietly in Spanish with Diana's uncle. Diana's parents take vastly different approaches to watching their daughter play: for Lily, the game is a social occasion, with plenty of opportunities to shout; for Mario, it's more of a reflective interlude, calling for a minimum of conversation.

In 1956, when Mario was seven, he emigrated with his family from Taurasi, Italy, near Naples, to Argentina. In his mid-teens, he played professional soccer for two years as a goalie for Newell's Old Boys, in the Argentine League, before going to work as a machinist. In 1978, he followed Lily, who was then twenty-two, to the United States, where her sister already lived. They got married in 1979 and settled in Chino. The following year, they had their first child, Jessika, and Diana was born two years later. She grew up speaking Spanish at home and at the house of her aunt and uncle, a few doors away.

When Diana was twelve, the family went back to Argentina—to Rosario, the country's third-largest city—for what Mario called "a vacation," and stayed for a year. "Now that's a hood," Diana says. "People walking around barefoot, people literally living in boxes and shacks made out of just iron sheets put together. At first, you're like, 'Man, people live like that?' But after living there for nine months—" She shrugs. "You know? People live like that."

They found a place in what Taurasi said was a nice lower-middle-class neighborhood. "It's kind of weird, because you open your front door, it's your kitchen, but you move the table and you park your car inside your kitchen. It's all about space. You know, limited space and you gotta make the best out of it." One evening, after a big dinner at a relative's house, her father was just about to close the doors when three men with guns pushed their way in. "They held us down, took whatever they could find—money, you know, Nintendo. Our cameras, clothes. I mean, I had just got a brand-new pair of shoes." She began to laugh. "Brand-new pair. Topper—it was a big brand out there. I was like, 'Yeah, I got my new shoes.' And when the guy left he took off his old beat-up shoes, threw them there, and put on my new ones. I was a little pissed about that." Her sneakers fit the holdup man. Taurasi, at twelve years old, was already five feet eleven.

Taurasi had been picked out as a prodigy by coaches on the Southern California basketball circuit before she left for Argentina. But she'd played for soccer teams as well, so when she returned she had to be talked into playing basketball again. (Soccer is still the preferred sport in the Taurasi household; Mario follows the pro game closely, and Diana's soccer training shows in her uncanny footwork and in her watchfulness on the court.) Her coach, Guy Haarlammert, campaigned to get her back into the game. "It took me getting her sister to play on my team to get her to come play again," he said. "I knew it killed Diana to watch." She quickly moved up from Haarlammert's local Amateur Athletic Union team to an A.A.U. all-star squad called SoCal Women's Basketball. (The A.A.U. runs basketball leagues and tournaments for players aged ten to eighteen.) Her SoCal coach, Lou Zylstra, watched her play as an eighth grader, and said to himself, "If this is not the best player in the nation, then I'm really going to be surprised when I do see the best player."

Unfortunately for Mario and Lily,

most of the highlights of their daughter's career from that point on happened far from home. In 1996, in the summer between Diana's eighth- and ninth-grade years, her SoCal squad won the national championship for her age group, at a tournament in Cocoa Beach, Florida. She brought home awards from tournaments in New Orleans, Dallas, Knoxville, Portland, Phoenix, Las Vegas. Her parents missed all of this. Mario still hasn't visited UConn; he's planning his first trip there for Diana's last home game, March 2nd, against Pittsburgh, on Senior Day.

One feat they did get to see was a streak, in her junior year at Don Lugo, during which Taurasi hit the winning shot in the final minute of five straight games: Against the Chaffey Tigers, in the last thirty seconds; against the Hanford High Bull Pups, with fifteen seconds left; against the Santa Barbara Dons, a buzzer beater; against the Ayala Bulldogs, with one second to go. Against the El Toro Chargers, with three minutes to go, she was elbowed in the throat and knocked out cold. "I'm not sure it was an accident," her coach at Don Lugo, Larry Webster, says. When she came to, a moment later, she scored ten points in a row, leaving her team down by one. Then, "with I don't know how many seconds, I ended up with the ball on the free-throw line and just knocked down the jumper. Won the game."

"I promised Dee when I recruited her, 'I'm going to make you the best player in the country. If we do it right, you're going to be the best player that's ever played,'" Auriemma said. "I told her this in her house and again when she was here on her visit."

Taurasi belongs to the first senior class to have played all the way through high school and college during the W.N.B.A. era; she was a ninth grader when the league had its first season. In that time, the recruiting process has changed. Auriemma told me that in 1991, when he was trying to get Rebecca Lobo, the six-foot-four anchor of his first championship team, to come to UConn, he could just pick up the phone and call her whenever he wanted. Now coaches are allowed only eight calls in the three months before the September of a student's senior year in high school. "If you want to recruit a kid, you have to contact their coach, their handler, their personal trainer, the guy who drives them to practice, the guy who picks them up from practice, the guy who works on their jump shot, the guy who works on their post moves," Auriemma says.

Taurasi had been playing at the national level for years, but UConn, which had just won its second championship, offered her something new: teammates who were better than she was. When she showed up at the UConn gym as a freshman, in the fall of 2000, Taurasi found the most brutal competition in women's basketball, and she loved it.

"Every practice was a dogfight," she said. "Coming in, you're like, Wow. You're used to playing jayvee teams in high school, and now you're playing against the best players in the country."

But within months the Huskies lost their two top scorers to injury—the All-Americans Shea Ralph, the M.V.P. of the championship game the previous year, and Svetlana Abrosimova, the prodigious scorer from St. Petersburg (when Auriemma complained about the selfishness of the Russian's shooting, she told him, "I didn't come three thousand miles to pass"). In her first N.C.A.A. tournament, in March, 2001, Taurasi took on the burden of scoring until the team reached the Final Four, where she shot a nightmarish one-for-fifteen against Notre Dame and fouled out. UConn lost, 90–75. The freshman, who had been voted Most Outstanding Player of the N.C.A.A. East Region, went to the bench, put her head in a towel, and cried.

Auriemma says, "I remember just sitting in front of her saying, 'Good game, nice to know Diana Taurasi can cry a little. So you're not the M.V.P. of this game right now and you have a chance to cry. Yeah, you're the reason we lost, but you know what? You're the reason we're here. So relax, man! It works both ways.'" The next day, and every day for the next week, Taurasi went to the UConn gym. "And there she was, just killing people," Auriemma says. "Making every shot, destroying everybody on the floor."

In Taurasi's sophomore year, UConn had a perfect season: thirty-nine games without a loss, leading to a championship game against Oklahoma in March, 2002. Judging by the W.N.B.A. draft, that Husky team had the strongest senior class ever: the starters Sue Bird, Swin Cash, Asjha Jones, and Tamika Williams were chosen first, second, fourth, and sixth in the league draft. With the championship on the line, however, Auriemma put the ball in Taurasi's hands. With 1:45 left, she went to the basket against the Oklahoma Sooner star Stacey Dales and another Oklahoma defender, hit a three-footer out of the double-team and then a free throw, making Dales foul out in the process. The Huskies won, 82–70.

In her junior year, Taurasi was the only returning starter, and nobody expected much of UConn. But she made a collection of inexperienced underclassmen nearly undefeatable. The Huskies extended their unbeaten streak for thirty-one more games—the record in women's basketball and the second-longest winning streak in N.C.A.A. history, behind U.C.L.A.'s eighty-eight straight back in the John Wooden–Bill Walton era, in the early seventies. UConn lost only once in that season, to Villanova, in the finals of the Big East Championship, and in retrospect even the loss seemed charmed, perfectly timed to shake them out of complacency and propel them to the national championship.

The pressure on Taurasi to keep it all up has been enormous. During a recent road trip, Auriemma complained to the press, "We've got a couple guys on our team whose favorite play is 'Let's go, Dee!'"

When I first spoke with Auriemma, early in the season, UConn had not suffered a single loss. "I would love to be able to sit here and tell you that I planned this all out," he told me. "I would love nothing more than to write a book and make it a best-seller and then do a movie and have Mel Gibson play me. But none of that would be true. She just had the greatest year anybody's ever had last year. Is it realistic to expect her to do it again? Could she do that again? Like, is there an end? Is there no end?" He referred to himself mockingly as the Wizard of Oz, the man behind the curtain.

The official opening of Taurasi's final season with the Huskies came at an exhibition called the Supershow, at Gampel Pavilion, on the UConn campus in Storrs. At the introduction of the girls—in Connecticut they say "How about those girls?" the way New Yorkers say "How about those Yankees?"—the court went dark, the music started, and each of the Husky women ran through a corridor of sparkler fire. Ann Strother, the forward from Colorado, gave a demure wave; Barbara Turner, the post player from Cleveland, danced a happy dance; Ashley Battle, the muscular defensive specialist from Pittsburgh, did a few pushups; Jessica Moore, the statuesque center from Alaska, pretended to blow smoke off a gun barrel. When Diana came out, last, she stopped and looked up at the crowd for a few moments. Then she pointed at the rafters for two beats, striking a pose that was a blend of dignity and house-party cool.

After the show, Taurasi sat for more than two hours with a pair of black and silver Sharpies, signing her name on jerseys, programs, T-shirts, *Sports Illustrated* articles, Final Four banners, a team picture from her first championship season ("Look at that smile—sophomore guard," she said. "The good old days"). As the Husky fans inched their way to the head of the line in the frigid October night, Taurasi kept a steady and hospitable rhythm, tapping her pen, shaking her sneakers, and greeting hundreds of preteen girls, harried moms, balding fathers: "How are you? . . . From Chicago! . . . Where you been, little booger? You're so cute! . . . What's up? You tired? . . . Awesome! . . . You have fun today? You play a little ball?"

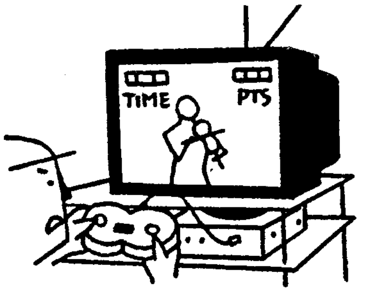
"When I met her the first time, I was struck by how lighthearted everything was with her," Auriemma says. "That's probably why she's able to perform in all those pressure situations." Morgan Valley, her freshman-year roommate and longtime opponent in one-on-one ("Never won one," Valley says. "Never. Nope. Nothing"), told me, "What's behind her is behind her. She doesn't even look forward. She just lives in the moment."

She is, above all, a twenty-one-year-old athlete who almost never stops moving. She can't sit through movies, she says, and she has read only one book from cover to cover: "Practical Modern Basketball," by the former U.C.L.A. coach John Wooden. "I read articles," Taurasi says. "But whole books? I'm not into reading. Oh, I'll read—I like reading—but I'd rather watch television. I'm not going to lie."

Taurasi, a sociology major, has earned a comfortable C average. During the basketball season, her schedule can be brutal—weightlifting before morning classes, practice again at midday, study at night. Even when she's back from a road trip, she lives out of a team-issue duffelbag. In between, she plays video games in her dorm room (she's unbeatable at Madden Football) or cards with her teammates (when she can't win, they say, she cheats). In public, Taurasi gets more attention than she needs, and she's used to shutting it out. On the plane ride to the West Coast for the Pepperdine game and another at U.S.C., she put Tupac on her CD player, held her hand over her face, and listened to her music for the entire flight. "You talk to so many people," she says. "It just comes to a point where, how different can it get?"

On December 3rd, the day before the Huskies flew to Los Angeles, the W.N.B.A. held its draft lottery, and the Phoenix Mercury won the first pick. The ownership gave no formal indication about whether it would select Taurasi, but, in a phone call a week earlier, the general manager, Seth Sulka, left no doubt about his intentions. He compared Taurasi to LeBron James (impact on ticket sales, ability to deliver on hype), and then to Charles Barkley and Magic Johnson (talent plus charisma), before settling on Larry Bird. Then he listed the traits that she and Bird had in common: "She can just flat out shoot the ball from distance. She can shoot clutch. Her court vision is so instinctive and amazing—her ability to see her teammates, to look down the floor, to move the ball through the air. But the thing that's going to separate her is her killer instinct. She'll rip your jugular out on the court. I mean, she's the nicest person and has a great smile, but she'll rip your jugular out. That's the ultimate defining factor."

I asked him if that killer instinct was rare in the women's game. "I think it's extremely rare in the *men's* game," Sulka said. "I think it's extremely rare in professional sports."



Right now, Mario and Liliana Taurasi are mostly worried about her distance from home. "I want her in L.A.!" Lily said. "We could see a day game in Phoenix on a Saturday," Mario added. "Five, six hours' drive there after work on Friday. Go to the game. And then back home that day. Only for a Saturday game, though. I couldn't do that for a Sunday and still make it to work."

Like many basketball phenoms, Taurasi dreams of taking care of her parents. "Have them just sit on the couch, do whatever they want," she says. "You want to watch TV all day, Dad? Do that. Get them out to Italy, hopefully. Go to Argentina." But W.N.B.A. players don't get contracts that allow them to hire their parents to run their foundations. Salaries are capped at eighty-seven thousand dollars, and the top first-round picks get a shade more than forty thousand. (The mandated minimum in the men's league is $366,931.) Even if Taurasi signs a sneaker contract like the one that the ex-UConn star and Naismith Award winner Sue Bird received from Nike, for a reported hundred thousand dollars a year, her earnings as a professional will be comparatively modest. (Her fellow-senior Morgan Valley is headed for a job as a Huskies coaching assistant.) "It's the world we live in," Taurasi says. "If you're a woman, you're screwed."

Unlike men who make the transition from college to the pros, Taurasi may soon be getting less attention than she has become accustomed to. UConn plays before an average crowd of 13,937, the largest in women's college basketball. Although several W.N.B.A. teams claim to bring in more than ten thousand people a game, such figures are based on tickets sold, mostly at deep discount, and other accounting tricks. (The average N.B.A. crowd is 16,733.) But, Sulka says, "Our business is unique in that a player like this can change the whole fortunes and directions of a team, and maybe a league"—just as Magic and Bird ushered in a new era for the N.B.A.

The W.N.B.A. is also looking to increase its profile in the Latin market, with ten games set to run on Telemundo. Taurasi's appeal as a bilingual star is a key attraction for the Phoenix team, in a city that is thirty-four per cent Hispanic. "I'll be a little Ricky Martin for a while," she says. "Can't sing—but I can play a little bit."

Basketball reductivists, the sort of people who say that the only minutes of a game that matter are the last two, would need no more than ten minutes to watch a year's worth of the Huskies' close games in recent seasons. Taurasi has spent a lot of game time on the bench in blowouts, watching UConn's reserves get some playing time.

She didn't get to sit much against Duke's Blue Devils, on January 3rd. Duke has its own big star, Alana Beard, the likely No. 2 player in the draft, who has more speed and unpredictability than Taurasi. Beard is surrounded by a strong team, which includes the six-foot-five Iciss Tillis, the daughter of James (Quick) Tillis, the first man to last ten rounds with Mike Tyson, and the six-foot-three Mistie Bass, the daughter of Chubby Checker.

For much of the season, Auriemma had been complaining about the Huskies' slow starts, but this game began emphatically, with Taurasi drawing so many defenders as she went to the basket that it looked as if she were throwing a pass from the back of a crowded elevator. Jessica Moore got a few quick baskets, and Taurasi hit a three-pointer, and suddenly it was 14–2. Until deep in the second half, Duke looked lost.

Then, with 3:53 left and UConn ahead, 64–50, Beard began slipping inside, for circus shots and flying wonders, then fading out for a long three-pointer. As their lead disappeared, UConn seemed to forget how to pass inbounds or dribble across the half-court line. The crowd at the Hartford Civic Center, thunderous during the scoring runs of the first half, fell silent. Finally, Taurasi did what everyone expected: she hit a jumper to give UConn a two-point lead with 4.6 seconds left.

Four and a half seconds can be a long time in basketball. Lindsey Harding, the Blue Devils guard, sprinted upcourt and drove straight for the basket, where she was double-teamed. Harding spotted Jessica Foley, a Duke recruit from Wodonga, Australia, standing alone and passed to her. As time ran out, Foley launched the game-winning three-pointer over the head of UConn sophomore Ann Strother. Then the entire Duke team raced across the gym and wrestled Foley to the floor.

The UConn players looked unmoored. Taurasi emerged from the locker room with red-rimmed eyes. "Usually we put the nail in the coffin," she told reporters. "Today we just couldn't get it done." The normally wry and unsentimental Strother broke into tears.

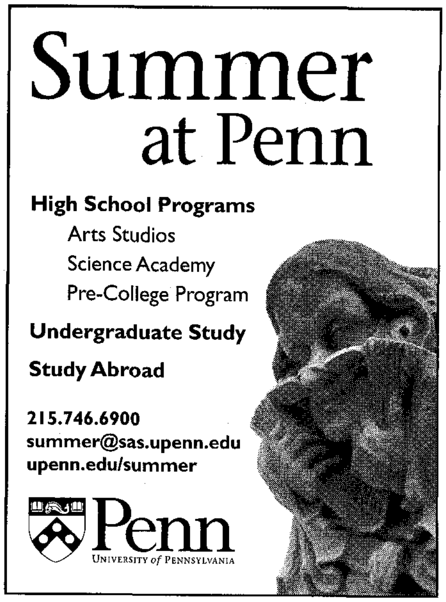
The following weeks were rough on the Huskies. Duke took over the No. 1 ranking in the national polls, and UConn fell to No. 4, but what seemed worse was that Duke had revealed their weaknesses: they were slow, they depended too much on Taurasi. They were torturing themselves over the loss—they lost again ten days later to a team they should have beaten easily.

But then the other players on the UConn team woke up. Ann Strother scored a career-high twenty-seven points against St. John's, and she and Barbara Turner began to show a willingness to take control of games and score under pressure. The two of them were ready, a few weeks later, when the Huskies faced the Tennessee Lady Vols in Knoxville.

The game brought out the best and worst on all sides—hard fouls, lousy officiating, and matching bursts of scoring. Every time Taurasi touched the ball, the 22,515 Tennessee fans booed. ("Booing?" she said after the game. "I thought they were mooing.") But against Tennessee Taurasi got a lot of help from her teammates, with some moments of stunning athleticism from Turner and, especially, Strother. The contest felt closer than it was: the Lady Vols held the lead only twice, for a total of thirty-two seconds early in the first half, and the Huskies won, 81–67.

After the game, a local reporter asked if Ann Strother was the new Lady Vol killer. Taurasi pushed the microphone over to her teammate. "Here," she said to Strother. "Passing the torch." Strother laughed.

"We needed the other guys to see that we don't need her as much as they think they do," Auriemma said. By the end of February, they had regained the No. 1 ranking. Just as they headed into another N.C.A.A. tournament, the Huskies had a group of players who didn't have to be asked to take their turn. And they still had Diana. ♦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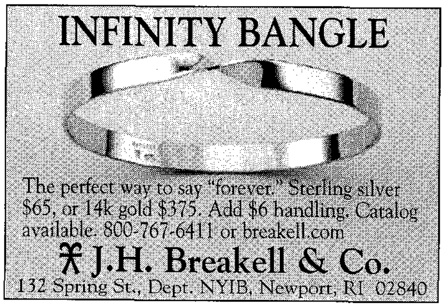
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ANNALS OF CULTURE

THE MEASURE OF AMERICA

How a rebel anthropologist waged war on racism.

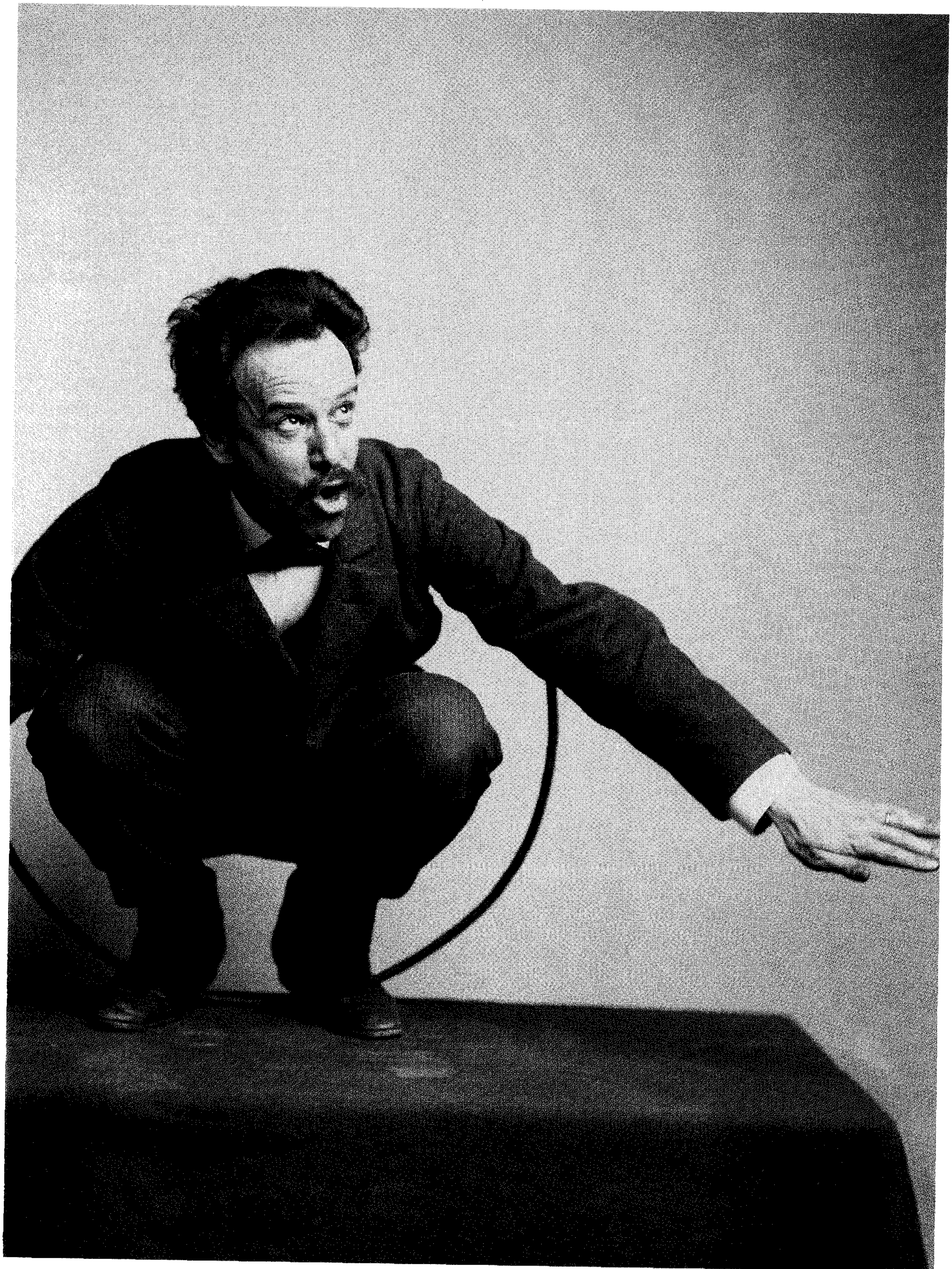
BY CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT

LEFT: COURTESY AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY; NAA, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Along with the Ferris wheel, the hamburger, Cracker Jack, Aunt Jemima, the zipper, Juicy Fruit, and the vertical file, the word "anthropology" was introduced to a vast number of Americans at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Marking the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America—and opening just a little late, in May, 1893, owing to the amount of construction required to turn a marshy wasteland on Lake Michigan into a neo-classical "White City," as the fair was called—the six-month celebration put on display all that the nation had achieved and still hoped to become. Here proud Americans could view the table on which the Declaration of Independence had been signed, the manuscript of Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address, and two full-scale replicas of the Liberty Bell—one executed entirely in grain, the other in oranges. As for the future, the fair was ablaze with work-reducing inventions, from the electric kitchen to the electric chair. But the most important promise of an American utopia was the extraordinary assembly of peoples. American Indians and native Africans, Germans, Egyptians, and Labrador Eskimos were just a few of those invited to take part in nearly a hundred "living exhibits"—whole villages were imported and exactingly rebuilt—with the purpose of expanding American minds: "broadening, opening, lighting up dark corners," a contemporary magazine expounded, "bringing them in sympathy with their fellow men."

No one was more devoted to this goal than a young anthropologist named Franz Boas, who had emigrated from Germany ten years before, staunch in the belief that America was "politically an ideal country." Enthralled by the collections of the American Museum of Natural History, in New York, he had

Franz Boas (above), posing for an exhibit o



he Kwakiutl tribe, in 1895. A Kwakiutl chief (left) at a feast organized by Boas on an expedition to British Columbia in 1894.

made his field of study the Indians of the Northwest Coast—the artistically accomplished Haida, Kwakiutl, and Bella Coola tribes—and, in the days leading up to the fair's triumphal opening, he was busy supplying the final timbers for a pair of houses in which a Kwakiutl group would live, on the bank of a pond outside a small pavilion marked "Anthropology." Inside was a spectacular array of masks and decorated tools, which Boas had spent two years assembling. His expectations for impressing visitors derived less from the works' richly painted surfaces, however, than from their intellectual and imaginative content—what he described as the "wealth of thought" that was clearly visible if only people learned to look. The Indians had been asked to perform the rituals that would enable viewers to perceive this wealth, and had been assured that at the fair they would receive the respect that was their due, even if it had been no part of their experience in the old, demonstrably un-utopian New World.

In fact, the wretched history of Indian life in nineteenth-century America had long been justified by the claims of anthropology, a field that originated during debates over slavery and the right of settlers to seize the natives' lands, and patriotically embraced such practices as part of the natural racial order. The chief means of establishing the racial order was to measure skulls—both the conveniently empty craniums acquired through a thriving graveyard market and the more resistant living models. Anthropologists presented their findings as objective science: elaborate measuring techniques yielded columns of figures that inevitably placed white intelligence at the top of the scale, red and yellow capacities farther down, and blacks at the wholly uncivilizable bottom. It was no coincidence that this science faithfully mirrored popular opinion: published studies were so open in their manipulation of evidence—a higher proportion of male skulls, for example, were employed when larger dimensions were desired—that they appear to have been not conscious attempts at deception but unwitting examples of delusion.

The effects of such studies, however, were painfully real. At mid-century, the anthropologist Samuel Morton asserted that whites and Negroes belonged to different species, while another anthropologist, Josiah Nott, popularized the view that slavery saved Negroes from reverting to their original barbaric state: these authoritative voices resounded in the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, of 1857, in which Chief Justice Roger Taney resolved that "the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit." After Emancipation, theories of separate racial evolutions fuelled the case for black disenfranchisement, right up to the passing of the first Jim Crow laws, around the time of the Chicago fair.

Franz Boas had come of age in a far more liberal scientific tradition. In the first half of the century, the great German natural scientist Alexander von Humboldt had dismissed all hierarchical notions of race. Although the frenzy for measuring skulls later tore through Germany, a professor of medicine named Rudolf Virchow—Boas's most revered teacher—prevented racial prejudice from gaining "scientific" support by strictly controlling the country's anthropological institutions. Boas himself was convinced by his early field work that the accepted view of "primitive" cultures was wrong. In his first substantive article in America, he demolished the standard claim that Indian and Eskimo speakers used different sounds for the same word at different times, and showed that the purported vagueness of "primitive" speech was actually a characteristic of the primitive ears of anthropologists, who transcribed differing approximations of what they heard at different times. The full implications of this change in thinking—how many assumptions about "primitive" faculties depended on flaws in "civilized" perception?—were left unstated. Boas kept his scope narrow and his tone mild: he demonstrated how easily such confusion occurred through mistakes in his own notes.

Boas was not by nature a timid soul. Small in stature but formidably intense, he had a shock of dark hair like an eagle's crest and a face slashed with mysterious scars. (People whispered of early duels.) But he was also a young man desperate for work in a country where scarcely more

Boas's students Zora Neale Hurston, who measured skulls in Harlem, and Margaret Mead, with two Samoan girls; Claude Lévi-Strauss, who sought Boas out in America.

than half a dozen institutions regularly employed an anthropologist. There were plans now for a new museum in Chicago, to be built from the collections amassed for the fair. Boas had moved his family west from New York City; he had invested everything in study and preparation. His future, no less than that of the Indians, was staked on the lessons that he and the fair were going to teach America.

As it turned out, the Chicago fair was a colossal freak show—a racist phantasmagoria, with commercial interests under the guise of "anthropology" catering to every cheap and lurid prejudice. Boas's Indians could hardly compete for attention with the Egyptian belly dancers and battling Bedouins of the thronging Midway. Native African villagers from Dahomey—bare-breasted and reportedly cannibalistic—were continually invoked in the press as evidence of the American Negro's savage nature, a judgment given credence by the Smithsonian Institution's display about racial evolution, which was mounted in the United States pavilion. Few African-Americans had been asked to take part in their country's exhibits, but on the fairgrounds two eloquent Negro voices were raised. The venerable Frederick Douglass, aged seventy-six, disputed the so-called "Negro Problem" from the Haitian pavilion, proclaiming that Americans' real problem was whether they could "live up to their own Constitution." And the crusader Ida B. Wells distributed ten thousand copies of a pamphlet about the increasingly common American ritual of lynching—there had been two hundred and forty-one victims in 1892—which included graphic accounts of horrors committed even while the nation was celebrating the peace and harmony of the White City.

Boas worked at the fair until it closed its gates, and then, after passing a brutal winter in Chicago, he was turned down for the hoped-for museum job, and also for a job at the University of Chicago, with the comment that he did not "take direction" well. Still, his experiences seem to have offered him something valuable: a wider view of America, which, back in New York in the summer of 1894, he put into a speech before the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In carefully practiced English, and with the same regard for detailed proof that he had shown in his earlier work, Boas stood up and informed the gathered dignitaries that their anthropology amounted to nothing more than a political justification of the suppression of the American Negro.

Ticking off every standard "scientific" claim of black inferiority, Boas demonstrated either its falseness or its dependence on the Negro's history of privation. "Eminent men," he pointed out, "represent a much better nourished class." In failing to take history into account, scientists had confused cause with effect: the plight of the American Negro was the product of racism, not its source. Given the facts of colonialism in Africa, slavery in America, and, above all, the burden that every American Negro continued to bear—"The old race feeling of the inferiority of the colored race is as potent as ever and is a formidable obstacle to its advance"—it was impossible for scientists to infer a lack of inherent ability from the Negroes' current status: "We might rather wonder how much has been accomplished in a short period against heavy odds." The speech, as coolly argued as it was heartfelt, marked a turning point in Boas's thinking and, eventually, in the country's thinking about race.

Change was, of course, a long time coming, and Boas's early efforts seemed to do no more than incite the opposition. The august president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Daniel G. Brinton—the author of a textbook that placed the African Negro "midway between the Orang-utang and the European white"—responded at the next annual meeting, denying that the differences between the races were a result "merely of opportunities and externalities," and insisting that some human stocks were "constitutionally recreant to the codes of civilization." The practical aim of anthropology in providing such knowledge, he concluded, was to lend "a positive basis for legislation, politics, and education as applied to a given ethnic group." Brinton's speech was published in *Popular Science Monthly* in November, 1895, six months before the Supreme Court's decision in Plessy v. Ferguson established "separate but equal" as the law of the land.

Boas knew that he required an institutional base—such as his German mentors had—where the forces of change might be nourished and grow. He had given up on such a possibility when, unexpectedly, he found himself with two: by 1896, anthropology had become so newsworthy that the American Museum of Natural History decided it needed a permanent curator, and Columbia College set out to establish a department. Boas took on positions with both, forming a triangular bond that eventually provoked not only pride and accomplishment but also fury and dissent, as, through the decades, he fought for the recognition of Indian and African cultures, for keeping the doors at Ellis Island open, and for civil rights: the Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which in 1954 swept away more than a century of racist law, is impossible to imagine without his influence. Such consuming fights were not what Boas had intended in coming here—he had thought that the country might save *him*—but, given his background and his beliefs, he had no choice but to spend his life making a reality of American ideals.

Growing up in the small Prussian city of Minden, Boas practiced eating foods he didn't like "in order to accustom myself to deprivations in Africa," and eating no food at all to prepare for the rigors of Arctic travel. He pointed to certain beloved books as the source of his keen explorer's urge: Humboldt's "Cosmos" and, his favorite, "Robinson Crusoe." As for his egalitarian politics, Boas spoke of his origins in a German home "in which the ideals of the revolution of 1848 were a living force." But ideological friends and foes alike have suggested a deeper source both for Boas's longings to escape and for his stalwart liberalism: his enlightened German home was Jewish, and he was born in 1858, ten years after the democratic revolution failed, when the freedoms that had been gained by German Jews were being violently stripped away.

"I am and remain an unregenerate idealist," Boas wrote to his older sister decades later, "and for that you and I have our mother to thank." Their mother, Sophie Meyer, and her younger sister Fanny had been swept into the turmoil of 1848 by a medical student named Abraham Jacobi, a member of the illegal Communist League; when, in 1851, Jacobi was arrested for treason, he was carrying letters from both sisters. He spent two years in prison, during which Sophie married

FROM TOP: CARL VAN VECHTEN / VAN VECHTEN TRUST / YALE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY; INSTITUTE FOR INTERCULTURAL STUDIES / LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

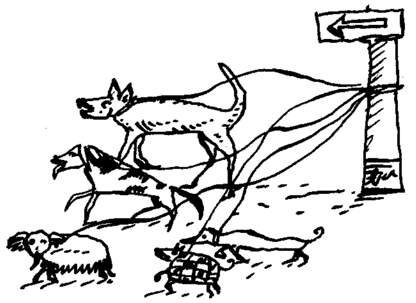
the gentle and dependable Meier Boas; she was expecting her second child when Jacobi was suddenly released and fled the country, visiting Marx in London and Engels in Manchester before settling in New York, where he married another recent émigré, Sophie's sister Fanny. In the following years, "Uncle Jacobi" in the thrillingly distant and nearly mythical country became a crucial figure for young Franz Uri Boas, Sophie and Meier's only son—they had three girls—to survive past infancy. He was a sickly child, and seashore visits that were intended to improve his health provoked a scientific curiosity that made him drive his frail frame harder; with great excitement, he wrote to Uncle Jacobi about his studies of tides and fossils and about how he had run for hours in the snow and rain to be ready "for America."

And what of the country he was running from? Meier and Sophie considered themselves to be freethinkers, but they were also good Germans who had adopted Christmas as a kind of gift-giving national holiday while continuing to observe Jewish rituals out of family loyalty. Despite worshipping Schiller and other Enlightenment heroes, Franz appears to have been tormented by attendance at the local Protestant *Gymnasium*, where he was steeped in Western *Kultur*—devastating headaches kept him out of school for months at a time—but he was no more content with instruction from a local rabbi, which led to his "confirmation" at thirteen. A sense of unease within each community, a questioning of whether he could attain the full intellectual and aesthetic cultivation that the Germans call *Bildung:* these dilemmas seem to have brought a great deal of pain into his head. A letter he wrote to his older sister around the time of his confirmation recounts with shock that someone had pointed to him in a shop and remarked, "Jewish faces are hard to tell apart." But the shock suggests that overt anti-Semitism had not contributed much to the pain, yet.

It was at university that he learned to duel. He arrived at the University of Heidelberg in 1877, and had won his first scars by the end of a single term, fighting over a complaint of loud piano playing in his room. (He happily swore that his opponents' scars were worse.) Pursuing studies in physics, he moved to the University of Bonn, where, defying his father's request, he joined a fraternity—duels, fought with sabres, were de rigueur for fraternity members—and avenged a variety of insults. If Boas seems to have been spoiling for a fight, by the time he arrived at the University of Kiel, in 1879, the insults had become deliberate, and virulent, and focussed on his being a Jew.

That fall, as the country reached the depths of an economic recession, a struggling politician named Adolf Stöcker delivered a speech against "modern Jewry" to the Prussian state parliament—the first direct appeal to German voters on an anti-Semitic platform—and hit a thunderingly responsive chord; during the next two years, a national petition demanding quotas for Jews in the judiciary and in university teaching gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures. At Kiel, there were anti-Semitic meetings and an anti-Semitic students' petition—in opposition to which Boas and a friend, with great bravado, gathered signatures on a petition of their own. Coming home after completing his doctorate in physics in the spring of 1881, Franz informed his parents that he would again be sporting "a few cuts, one even on the nose! . . . With the damned Jew baiters this winter, one could not survive without quarrel and fighting."

It was Rudolf Virchow who made sure that the "damned Jew baiters" did not sweep away more in their path. A professor at the University of Berlin, and a Progressive Party leader who had twice defeated Stöcker for a seat in the Reichstag, Virchow became Boas's lifelong model of the scientist as social conscience. Boas first approached him seeking instruction in "physical anthropology": the techniques of measuring the body and, in particular, the skull, which served as the foundation of American racial science. It is evidence of just how easily manipulated these techniques were that Virchow used his results to argue for human adaptability—on the model of the body's cells' being continually renewed—and so for a broadly democratic body politic.



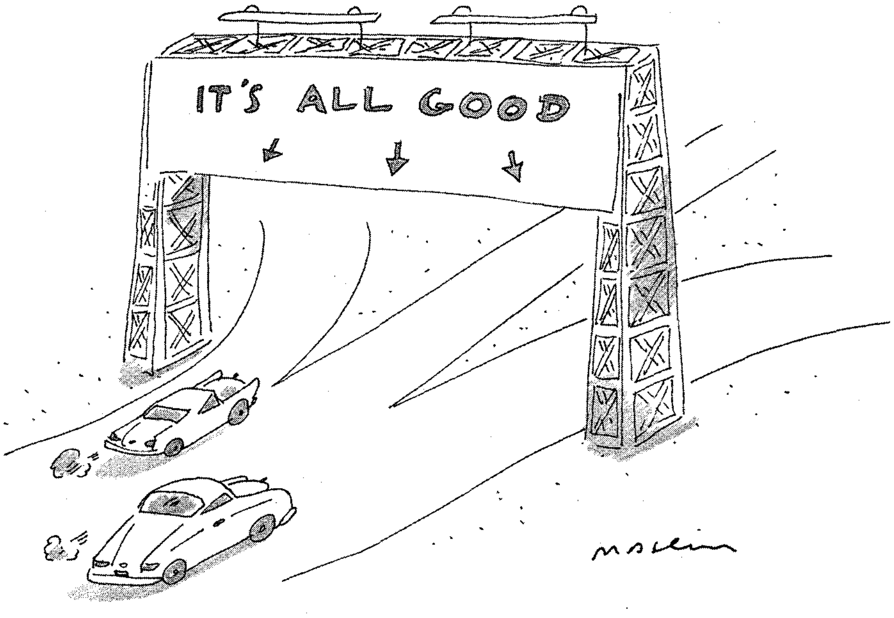
The young physicist's goals were veering from what people knew to how they knew it. At twenty-three, Boas informed Uncle Jacobi that he had discovered his professional objective: to study "the relation between the life of a people and their physical environment"—that is, the effects of what Boas would eventually teach us to call "culture" on what he then, more than a decade before Freud entered the field, called "the psychic life." He was not proposing to discover why little German Jewish boys were plagued with headaches or why they grew up to have faces slashed with scars. This was too complex and much too close. He had decided to start with the simplest environment that he could find and, at the same time, sail off into a boyhood dream: he was going to live with the Eskimos.

With little money and no academic backing, Boas persuaded the German Polar Commission to send him on an expedition to map the frozen expanse of Baffin Island, as part of the German contribution to the First International Polar Year. And, in a sudden rush before sailing, in the spring of 1883, he persuaded Marie Krackowizer, the twenty-two-year-old daughter of another revolutionary "Forty-eighter," to agree to become his wife; among his sparse Arctic gear he carried an Imperial flag emblazoned with "Marie."

Although Boas eventually published many studies of Eskimo life, the essential insight that informs all his work appears in a letter addressed to this exceedingly patient young woman—the expedition lasted more than a year—which he wrote after a catastrophic excursion had left his small group wandering half-frozen for twenty-six hours. Safe at last in a warm igloo, and gratefully eating raw seal liver among men who, he noted, always scrupulously shared what food they had, Boas reflected on the "real meaning" of his expedition: "I often ask myself what advantages our 'good society' possesses over that of the 'savages,' and find, the more I see of their customs, that we have no right to look down on them. Where among our people could you find such true hospitality?" This epiphany—a confirmation, he wrote, of what he had always suspected—seems to have explained and perhaps assuaged the painful lack of civility he had experienced among those who set the standards of his own civilization. "The idea of a 'cultured' individual is merely relative," he continued: this was an observation that echoed down the next century. "The evil as well as the value of a person lies in *Herzenbildung*"—that is, the cultivation of the heart—"which I find or find lacking here just as much as among us."

Finally, the time arrived to rejoin Marie, whose father, an Austrian Catholic freethinking physician, had emigrated to America years before, and was now a good friend of Uncle Jacobi's. Marie, whom Boas had met while their families vacationed together in Germany, had long since gone home. His ruminative letters were aimed at New York City, and so was the ship he boarded once his work was done, prepared to exchange Baffin Island for Manhattan island—one boyhood fantasy for another.

Disembarking in the fall of 1884, Boas entered the embrace of a ready-made family: a transplanted German-Austrian Jewish-Catholic altogether reform-minded group who were determined that the New World's democratic revolution would not fail—even if the promised land needed a great deal of work. Health conditions in the tenements, for example, were notoriously bad; Uncle Jacobi—Dr. Abraham Jacobi, for whom a Bronx hospital was later named—had opened the first children's clinic in the country. His friend Carl Schurz, another fire-breathing Forty-eighter, had been a campaign organizer for Abraham Lincoln and was now a determinedly pro-union journalist; a younger member of their circle, Felix Adler, had reinvented German Judaism as the Society for Ethical Culture, where prayer was replaced with campaigns for low-income housing and against child labor. For Franz Boas, there was one institution where a young anthropologist might similarly join his knowledge to his ideals, although no one yet suspected that it needed him as much as he needed it.



The American Museum of Natural History was the city's first great public institution, and it has reflected New York's contradictory spirit ever since President Grant laid the cornerstone, with a trowel from Tiffany's that was stolen as soon as he put it down. The auspicious event took place in 1874, five years after a group of city elders, spurred by Albert Bickmore, an ambitious renegade from Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology, agreed that New York ought not to lack anything that a mere provincial center like Boston had. The museum charter was approved in the Roosevelt family parlor, on East Twentieth Street, when Teddy, Jr., was eleven; the future President soon made his first donation of one bat, twelve mice, a turtle, a squirrel skull, and four bird eggs. So many other judiciously chosen bugs and shells were soon pouring in from local enthusiasts, and so many fine collections of stuffed and bottled beasts were purchased by Bickmore, as director, that the museum overflowed its original quarters, in the Central Park Arsenal, before it had fully moved in.

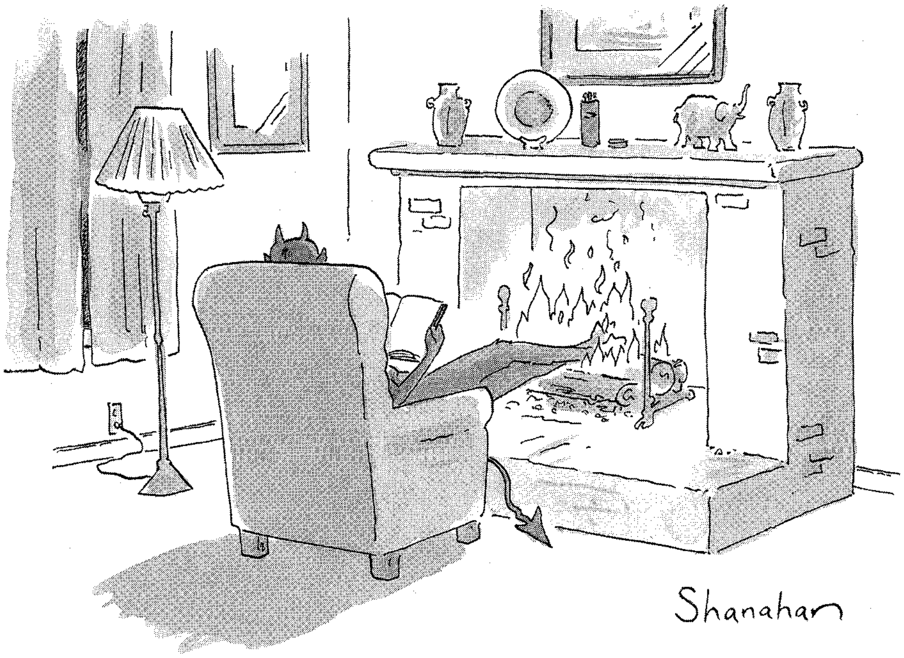
In the very first weeks, thousands of visitors packed the galleries, and exhibitions were quickly renewed to keep the crowds coming back. Unlike its Boston prototype, whose collections were largely reserved for the use of Harvard students, New York's museum was a chartered educational organization, with a civic mission: to help the city's toiling, tenement-dwelling, trowel-filching denizens escape the corrupting influences of city life and become civilized through an exposure to nature. Nonetheless, the trustees spent every cent of their money according to their personal desires and their sometimes quirky conception of the common good. Donated treasures like a life-sized tableau of "a lion attacking an Arab on a camel" might make Bickmore grumble about a "stuffed circus" (P. T. Barnum himself contributed a stuffed baboon), but he was stuck with what he got.

The museum's move to a new, Victorian extravaganza of a building in the unpopulated reaches of West Seventy-seventh Street—nearly a mile north of the El train—turned success into an empty, echoing mistake. In 1880, a devoted trustee named Morris K. Jesup was asked to cut expenses, but he decided instead that vastly more money should be spent; and after being elected president of the museum, in 1881, he pitched in more than half a million dollars of his own. Jesup was a Gilded Age hero: a self-made man who had left school at twelve and amassed a fortune in railroad securities but who longed for the education and, it seems, the childhood he had missed—one of the lost boys in suits who helped the museum grow up. His tenure lasted a quarter of a century, during which he hired the best scientists—Joel Asaph Allen in ornithology, Henry Fairfield Osborn in vertebrate paleontology, Boas in anthropology—but also painters, sculptors, and taxidermists, who conspired to offer serious knowledge with Barnum-style flair.

For Jesup, the most exciting areas of exploration were paleontology and anthropology: dinosaurs and men. Here were still discoveries to be made, theories to be proved, and spectacular exhibitions to be mounted. Although the first dinosaur remains had been unearthed in 1818, the creatures had little impact on the American imagination until, in the eighteen-nineties, a museum artisan invented a method for boring into the fossils' fragile cores, so that whole skeletons could be displayed in dramatic poses. To further excite the viewer's imagination, Osborn, a brilliant curatorial impresario, surrounded the skeletons with murals of living dinosaurs lumbering about the earth—images that were so widely reproduced that by the turn of the century the fantastical dragons had become as much a part of American childhood as baseball or cowboys and Indians.

Indians, viewed as part of the continent's natural history, were the museum's other legendary residents. It was not the tribes of the plains or the Southwest whose arts and tools were admired and eagerly collected, however—in the museum's early years, the Sioux, the Cheyenne, and the Navajo still presented too much of a living, landowning threat—but the tribes of the Northwest Coast, from British Columbia to Alaska. These rich, long-stable societies had struck even eighteenth-century Europeans of small racial sympathy with the "natural genius" of their creative work; a century later, when disease and legal strictures had taken a formidable toll, the best ethnological museums in the world were competing for their dying arts. Albert Bickmore had felt the importance of "salvaging" pieces of Northwest Indian art as early as 1880, and hundreds of masks, blankets, house posts, headdresses, rattles, and spoons were transferred from the Northwest Coast to New York City. In 1883, the *Times* celebrated the arrival of an enormous, thirty-man Haida canoe, hollowed from a single cedar tree and richly painted, prow and stern. It was suspended from the ceiling of a second-story gallery, where the ferocious animal decorating its bow glared hypnotically at viewers of the nearby anthropological cases—including, the following year, Franz Boas.

"I think every day about the museum and again about the museum," Boas wrote to Marie during his first stay among the Northwest tribes: a three-month trip, financed by Uncle Jacobi in 1886, that provided him with outstanding expertise in his newly chosen field. Yet for nearly a decade he remained an anthropological nomad, picking up whatever work he could: writing news summaries for the magazine *Science*—a stint that lasted long enough for him to marry Marie, in 1887—travelling to Vancouver or Berlin for short-term projects, teaching at Clark University, in Massachusetts, and finally making his way to the Chicago fair. He had become a published authority on a range of subjects—Indian linguistics, mythology, art—but, even so, when Jesup approached, Boas was not his first choice: at thirty-seven, he was considered too young and, doubtless, too much of an upstart. Jesup's offer depended on sharing the burden of Boas's salary with Columbia, and the dual appointment was confirmed only when a mysterious donation toward his salary was pledged. (This was one debt to Uncle Jacobi that his nephew never learned of.)



Boas began work at the American Museum of Natural History in 1896, a year of straitened finances for the city and, as it turned out, no funds at all for the museum's department of anthropology. The collection was already so large, as Jesup saw it, that nothing was needed except well-labelled displays. This did not bode well for Boas in his new position: unlike Jesup, he was a believer in "steady empirical work"—field work, omnivorous collecting, details—and claimed to distrust theories. But within a year he had initiated a project that Jesup called "the greatest thing ever undertaken by any museum"—a theory of national importance to prove.

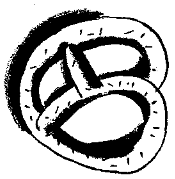
Jesup described it in the museum's annual report as "the theory that America was populated by migratory tribes from the Asiatic continent"—that the Bering Strait was once a land bridge, by which an Asian people later known as "American Indians" had entered the New World. The fact is now well accepted, and Boas had no doubts about it at the time. But what an impetus the inquiry provided, what adventures, and what bounty! For five years, the anthropologists, archeologists, and linguists of the Jesup Expedition fanned out over an area that extended from northwestern America to northeastern Russia. And from the moment the first New Yorkers (including Boas) arrived in British Columbia, in 1897, until the last hired Russians left Yakutsk, in 1902, they accumulated enormous knowledge about a multitude of cultures that were destined to vanish from the earth. In addition, they accumulated thousands of objects—huge totem poles were shipped to New York on special flatcars—and Boas wrote the first volume of the planned expedition series, on "Facial Paintings of the Indians of Northern British Columbia."

Trouble began when the rest of the volumes came due. It was to be expected that reports from outer Siberia should take time in getting written (some took thirty years). It was not expected that Boas would refuse to write a volume summarizing the results of these fantastically expensive voyages, or to provide an answer to the theoretical question he had posed. Like some anthropological Leonardo, he was obsessed with learning and entirely uninterested in setting his knowledge into finished form. Jesup was furious, and the venture that bears his name has reasonably been judged a failure. When it was over, there was a mass of information but no new understanding of just what the links were between the languages and myths and physiognomies of the peoples who were partitioned when glaciers melted into a sea.

But the maligned expedition led to a singular triumph: the museum's Hall of Northwest Coast Indians, which opened in 1899, and in which revolutionary scholarship was embellished with a touch of the German Romantic poet. Boas's notion of the hall was based on the Dresden Museum's display of the Sistine Madonna: deep shadows and a nearly religious sense of mystery. Plaster mannequins were used to suggest life and scale, and to provide displays of face painting, cooking, and weaving. The collection's most extraordinary objects required no aid in being brought to life: the fierce ceremonial masks with their glowering eyes set the place ablaze—as they still do—with the indignant energy of captive spirits.

It was Boas's organization of his treasures that caused a stir. Traditional exhibits grouped artifacts according to type—baskets, utensils, musical instruments—and in lines of development from simple to complex. Boas had announced his opposition to such displays: to understand what an object meant, the viewer must see it as its creators saw it, not in a pattern imposed by outsiders. His plan accorded each tribe an exhibition area of its own. As always with Boas, details concealed a broader argument: in this case, against seeing human culture in evolutionary terms, rising from the "primitive" to a summit on which the inventors of the evolutionary scheme inevitably perched. Boas liked to point out how recent most civilizations were and how time had revealed "innate" abilities: what would ancient Egyptians have said about prospects for the backward white race? The exhibition was filled with small rebellions—the display of face painting showed that Indian artists freely used both "primitive" (geometric) and "advanced" (realistic) styles—and it was meant to reshape the visitor's idea of culture itself.

It was hard enough to reshape the ideas of the trustees. Jesup complained that he could not make head or tail out of the Northwest Coast Hall, and that Boas was far too preoccupied with research. After 1902, with the expedition completed, Boas began complaining, too: museum displays could not reflect the historical and psychological dimensions that were essential to anthropology; besides, his requests for funds—he had proposed a huge "vanishing tribes" expedition to the American West—were being denied. While the conflict brewed, Boas's work at Columbia brought him the increasing satisfactions of independence and the admiration of students who were eager to have their ideas reshaped. The blowup with the museum came in 1905, when a collection of Peruvian artifacts was installed according to the old evolutionary scheme, flouting Boas's principles right under his nose. He made an appeal to Jesup, arguing that the museum's greatest duty was to demonstrate "that our people are not the only carriers of civilization." But within weeks he angrily resigned, citing "fundamental differences of opinion." When Boas departed, he left behind what even his rivals identified as one of the greatest anthropology departments in the world; and he had raised questions, at least, regarding what the museum should teach its visitors about the family of man. In a city where more than two million immigrants arrived during the first two decades of the century, the answers were urgent.



The year Boas assumed his job at the museum, the Supreme Court's "separate but equal" ruling ushered in a wave of segregated schools, hospitals, rest rooms, park benches, and railroad cars across the country; the year he quit, a visiting Pygmy from the Belgian Congo was displayed for weeks in a cage in the primate house of the Bronx Zoo. Boas returned to the real world with a pressing sense of the need for justice, and with a profound frustration at the science available for its pursuit. In May, 1906, at the request of W. E. B. Du Bois, he addressed the Negro student body of Atlanta University. Du Bois had asked him to speak on "the African physique," but Boas worried that he did not have evidence for the desired "new approach" to the physiology of race—all he could certainly prove was that the bigots had no evidence, either.

He spoke, instead, on the history of pre-colonial African civilizations, referring to German scholarship on iron production and political organization and Benin bronzes. He compared the position of Negroes in America to that of Jews in Europe, and advised the students to take hope in what African people had accomplished before they were enslaved. "Impartial scientific inquiry tells you to take up your work among your race with undaunted courage," he assured them—although he could cite no studies to support his claim. The same year, Boas tried to raise funds for an African Museum, and for a nationwide study of the American Negro. Failing in both efforts, he set out to produce the necessary evidence for a new approach himself.

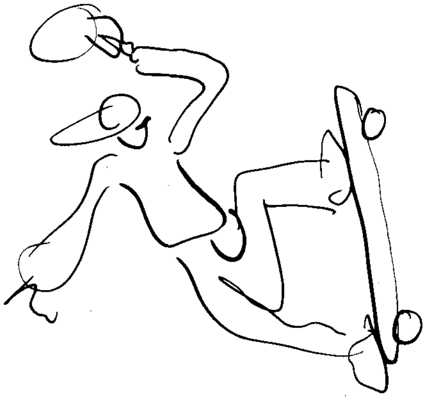
In 1908, Boas persuaded members of a congressional commission studying immigration that he could determine once and for all whether assimilation worked to produce desirable citizens. He had already published a critique of America's preferred system of measuring human craniums, reporting that the revered "cephalic index"—a number derived from the skull's width in relation to its length, and considered an infallible sign of ethnic identity—was so easily altered by extraneous factors (a person's height, for example) and so inconsistently applicable to different groups that it often did not "express any important anatomic relation" at all. No one appeared to take this view into account, however, when Boas proposed to measure some heads himself. For the next three years, he and a team of assistants measured nearly eighteen thousand recent immigrants and their children; the results, announced in 1911, were a shock to all. The cephalic index of the American-born children of every group—Southern Italians, East European Jews, Hungarians, Poles—had altered from established figures by a miraculous millimetre or two in length or width; the longer the parents had been in this country, the greater the difference, while European-born children of the same families showed no comparable change.

Just three years after the phrase "the Melting Pot" had been affixed to the city by the playwright Israel Zangwill, Boas proved that the most feared of the foreign hordes were adapting toward a new physical type that might one day be known simply as "American." Boas himself drew no such radical conclusions; he simply provided the numbers that allowed others to do so and suggested that "when these features of the body change, the whole bodily and mental make-up of the immigrant may change." He did not venture any reasons for the changes, although in the excitement of his announcement it seemed that everyone else was wondering: Could it be the nutrition? The air? Democracy?

Boas, of course, had a shining example of the powers of assimilation always before him. For all his worldly causes, he was a devoted family man: thick stacks of loving letters to and from his children—there were five in all—fill the Boas archive of the American Philosophical Society. The children spoke German and English, practiced no religion, and were unconditionally American: in one letter to his older brother Ernst, then serving as a U.S. Army doctor, fifteen-year-old Heinrich insists on being called Henry, rebels against short pants, and rhapsodizes over the jokes in "Huckleberry Finn." Boas himself belonged to no religious organization—Ernst reported that his father objected even to his joining the Society for Ethical Culture—but was a founding member of the Germanistic Society of America. Several scholars have questioned whether his assimilationist ideals were a product of his ambivalent identity as a Jew; others (perhaps less scholarly) have asked whether his ideals were not merely a front for Jewish advancement (approximately one-third of those measured in his survey were of "Hebrew" origin). Near the end of his life, Boas observed that "my ideals have developed because I am what I am and have lived where I have lived." But, however personal the origins of his thinking, his intellectual program was based on an unswerving German Enlightenment belief (and was there anything that more clearly marked him as a German Jew?) in the common humanity of all.

There were no Indians or Negroes included in the immigration survey, for obvious reasons. But, the same year, rounding off a sweeping attack, Boas published a "Handbook of American Indian Languages" and a volume of lectures titled "The Mind of Primitive Man," both of which mixed arcane anthropology with ideological dynamite. In the first systematic study of Indian grammars ever written, Boas refuted prevailing claims that "primitive languages" lacked the means for abstract thought; the minds that produced these languages were no different from our own. The even more incendiary lectures began with his speech of 1894, and went on to examine current racial theories, concluding, "There is every reason to believe that the negro, when given facility and opportunity, will be perfectly able to fulfill the duties of citizenship as well as his white neighbor." As in Atlanta, Boas saw the Negro's social plight as related to that of Jews and other "so called 'lower' types," whom many Americans feared were creating a "mongrel" nation. He argued that, biologically speaking, mongrelization served a nation well: the populations of Germany, Italy, and Britain were demonstrably mixed. All races could contribute to human progress "if we are only willing to give them a fair opportunity."

There were many who were not so willing, at least not on American soil, and they were not all necessarily villains. Unionists feared an influx of scab labor; guardians of the separation of church and state feared the new masses' old-fashioned religious ties. But there were also those who deliberately exacerbated every fear and prejudice. The most virulent attack on "the Boas propaganda" appeared in 1916 in a volume designed by its author, Madison Grant, to rouse Americans "to the overwhelming importance of race and to the folly of the 'Melting Pot' theory." Grant was a founding member of the New York Zoological Society—and the man responsible for the Pygmy being locked up in the zoo—who had extended a passion for preserving bison and caribou into a mania for preserving the "Nordic race." A wealthy lawyer with no scientific training, he reacted to Boas's immigration study with angry letters to politicians ("Dr. Boas, himself a Jew, in this matter represents a large body of Jewish immigrants") before hitting on the idea of a book addressed to an entire nation.



"The Passing of the Great Race" is essentially one long apocalyptic warning: "The immigrant laborers are now breeding out their masters and killing by filth and by crowding as effectively as by the sword." Grant was soon the recognized "high priest" of American racism, as Gunnar Myrdal later called him: our Count Gobineau, our Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and as instrumental in the formation of Nazi ideology as either of these more sinister figures. (Grant's family destroyed his papers after his death, but he is reported to have displayed a letter from Hitler that referred to his book as "my Bible.") In America, Grant's assertions were widely taken for scientific fact, because his book carried the stamp of approval of the American Museum of Natural History.

Grant had become a museum trustee thanks to his good friend Henry Fairfield Osborn, the curator of paleontology, who was appointed president of the board in 1908, after Jesup's death. Osborn's inauguration took place in the library of his uncle, J. P. Morgan, and the splendor of his relations lent his scholarship an added glow. To Osborn, this was his proper due: a tall and legendarily pompous figure, he was as famous for dropping other people's names as he was for quoting himself. Although he and Boas were mirror opposites in many ways, each was devoted to a practice of science with calculated political effects. Shortly after assuming his new position, Osborn informed Grant that he intended to make the museum a

HOW-TO

On the cliff you've just left
a puff of snow rings like smoke.
I didn't know snow did that.
Nor that a man could fling
himself from that height
and mean to land alive.
Soon, in love's descent,
I will learn how to drag
this image from my screen.
You, against your will, to survive.

—*Eliza Griswold*

"positive engine" for the "propagation of socially desirable views," views that he made clear by finding Grant a publisher for his book and by writing an appreciative preface that raised its ravings to the height of his own professional esteem.

Boas reviewed "The Passing of the Great Race" in *The New Republic* in January, 1917. He graciously began by noting the debt that New Yorkers owed its author for his services to the city's scientific institutions. It was only because the views that Grant expressed were so dangerous, particularly in being introduced by the great museum's eminent President Osborn, that the reviewer regretfully felt compelled to expose the author's faulty conception of heredity, his dogmatic assumptions, his lack of evidence, his numerous inconsistencies, his substitution of prejudice for conclusions, and his delusion of an aristocracy of race. In support of his own positions, Boas cited his immigration-commission findings of 1911, their confirmation by a European émigré anthropologist in Washington, and—so fundamentally alone was he still in America, after thirty years—the work of a contemporary German scientist named Eugen Fischer. In the midst of the Great War, Boas still hoped that German science might help America out of its racial quagmire, a hope that was not as far-fetched then as it seems now. He had visited his family in Germany many times, and he was well aware that even the liberal stronghold of anthropology had given way to Aryan hysteria. But he had faith in the work of men like Fischer, who had earned his fame with a book claiming that racial interbreeding promoted genetic health—in 1913, a year when twenty-nine American states had laws against interracial sex or marriage, and men like Grant and Osborn appeared to control the science of the future.

The science was called eugenics. The link between biology and authoritarian politics was set when, in 1883, Sir Francis Galton founded a discipline "which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race"; in 1910, he outlined a notably British utopia called Kantsaywhere, in which citizens obeyed strict laws of procreation while displaying a permanently courteous disposition. Galton, a cousin of Darwin's, was intent on undoing the damage that misguided societies had wrought in allowing the survival (and reproduction) of the less than fit. His doctrine spread quickly, initially finding as much support among progressives as among reactionaries—George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and even Winston Churchill were early believers—in England and, very soon, in Germany. By 1912, however, when the First International Congress of Eugenics took place, in London, only the late-starting American contingent had converted theory into practice: eight states—including New York, Connecticut, and California—had passed laws authorizing sterilization for epileptics, criminals, or the insane. Madison Grant was a fervent champion of such laws; his book held out the promise of their extension to "weaklings rather than defectives, and perhaps ultimately to worthless racial types." The primary targets of the American eugenicists were not, after all, in institutions; they were in the city streets, outbreeding their masters and killing by their crowding and filth, and more were arriving every day. And so the Galton Society, established by Osborn and Grant in the American Museum of Natural History in 1918, took the undoing of U.S. immigration policy as its first command.

Meeting once a month in Osborn's office, the society's members worked out racial interpretations of the recently invented I.Q. tests—higher test scores among immigrants who had been in the country longer were taken as proof of a flow of increasingly stupid immigrants—and rehearsed their testimony for the House Immigration and Naturalization Committee. In 1921, the museum was host to the Second International Congress of Eugenics. Osborn, in the opening address, made the challenge to Boas perfectly clear: "We are engaged in a serious struggle to maintain our historic republican institutions through barring the entrance of those who are unfit to share the duties and responsibilities of our well-founded government." Further, those now judged unfit would be unfit forever, since it was a matter of scientific fact "that education and environment do not fundamentally alter racial values."

The battle was joined with forces far from equal: one shabby classroom tucked into Columbia's journalism building and a few scholars struggling for an unendowed department's scanty funds (Osborn cheerfully referred to Boas's "comparatively obscure and uninfluential position") against a rich and politically seductive institution. Osborn, who disdained anthropology as "the gossip of the natives," had early on authorized a few touches to Boas's Northwest Coast Hall—the Haida canoe was filled with plaster warriors, brooding totem poles were set against the pillars—and then let it settle under dust. Now he contradicted everything it stood for with his own Hall of the Age of Man, which was a fixture of the museum until well after the Second World War. Featuring fossils and casts and Maxfield Parrish-like murals of cavemen, the hall presented a grandly orchestrated illustration of the proposition that the human races had been created as separate species, and ascended from dark beetle-browed brutes to the fair artists and chieftains of the North. It was left to visitors to locate their own place in the line.

By the early twenties, Boas seemed to be up against the will of a nation. The newly revived Ku Klux Klan had acquired an estimated four million members, and according to *The Saturday Evening Post* there were two books on race and immigration that "every American should read": Grant's "The Passing of the Great Race" and his disciple Lothrop Stoddard's "The Rising Tide of Color." Stoddard was neatly summarized by F. Scott Fitzgerald in "The Great Gatsby" when thick-skulled Tom Buchanan harangues Daisy and Nick from a book Tom calls "The Rise of the Coloured Empires, by this man Goddard." As Tom explains, "The idea is if we don't look out the white race will be—will be utterly submerged." And he adds, in words that must have made the walls at Columbia weep, "It's all scientific stuff; it's been proved."

In forty-one volumes published by the immigration commission, the significance of Boas's head-study findings was continually contradicted and easily lost. Boas testified before the House committee, but so did Grant and Stoddard. On April 3, 1924, Osborn published an article entitled "Lo, the Poor Nordic!" on the editorial page of the *Times*, in which he quoted his own remarks from the museum's eugenics congress and concluded with a paean to the Nordic race—which he described as having migrated to Italy just in time to become the ancestors of Raphael, Leonardo, Dante, and Columbus. A letter of response from Boas appeared on April 13th, under the heading "Serious Flaws Are Suspected in Professor Osborn's Theories," in which he warned, with an almost discernible tremor, "There is grave danger that on account of Professor Osborn's position as President of the American Museum of Natural History his words may be taken as expressing the final conclusions of science." But the battle was over. The headline on the front page that day read "IMMIGRATION BILL IS PASSED INTACT."

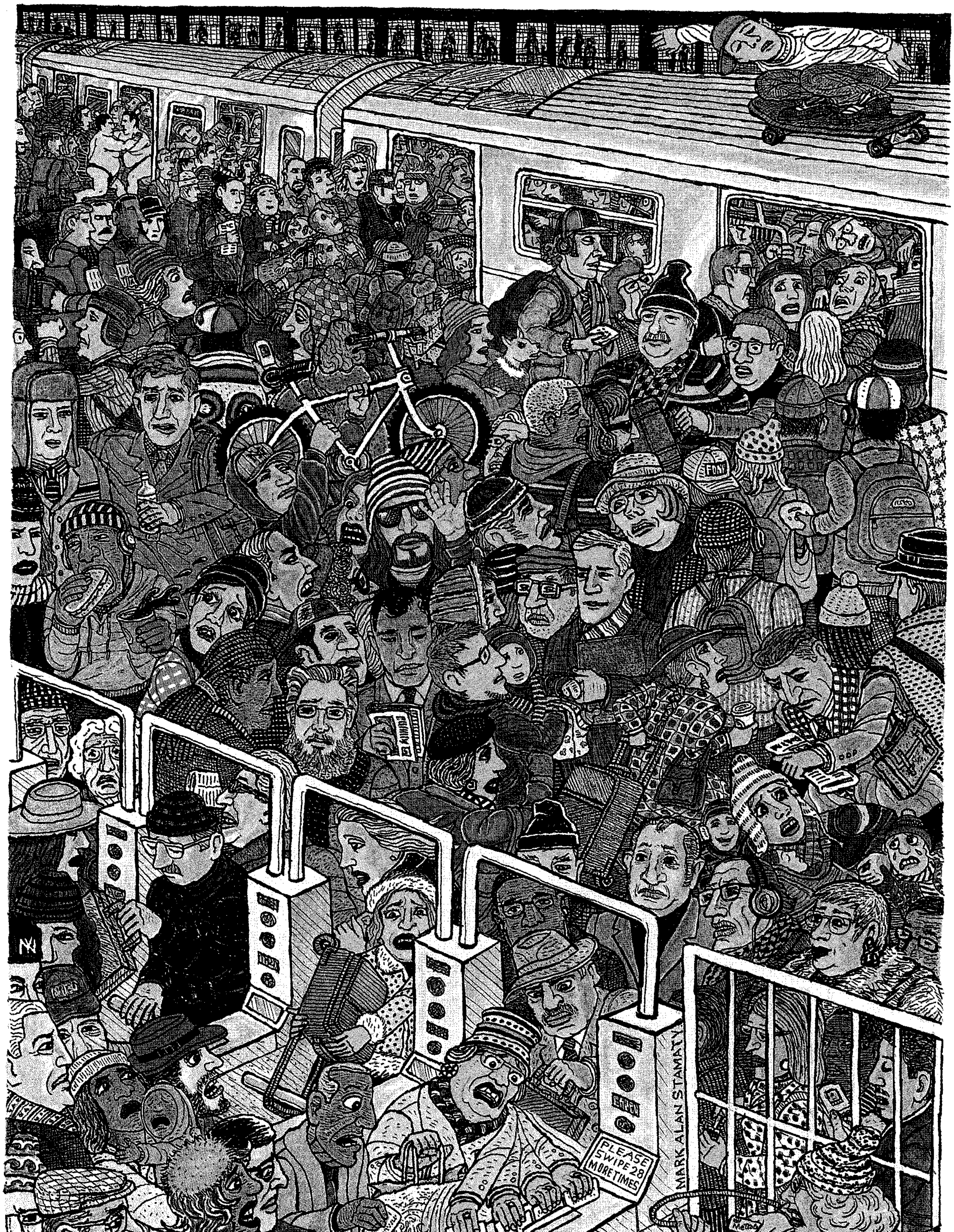
A law passed only three years earlier had reduced admissions to three per cent of every "nation" in the U.S. population, based on the census of 1910. The new bill reduced that figure to two per cent, and even this small number was limited to nations already present in 1890, a date chosen to keep the most despised immigrants out. The Johnson Immigration Bill—the brainchild of Albert Johnson, a Washington State Republican and the honorary president of the Eugenics Research Association—provoked a bitter House debate, with cries of "wops" and "dagos" crossing with charges of "un-American" discrimination. Although the demands of labor and the weary postwar spirit of isolationism played their roles in pushing the legislation through, much of the argument was couched in biological terms. (One of the bill's chief opponents, Representative Emanuel Celler, of New York, wrote to inform Boas that he was considering bringing three skulls onto the House floor—Nordic, Mediterranean, and Negro, indistinguishable from one another—in an attempt to subvert "biased knowledge.") The bill passed in the House by a vote of 326–71 and in the Senate by 62–6; it was signed into law by President Coolidge with the words "America must be kept American."

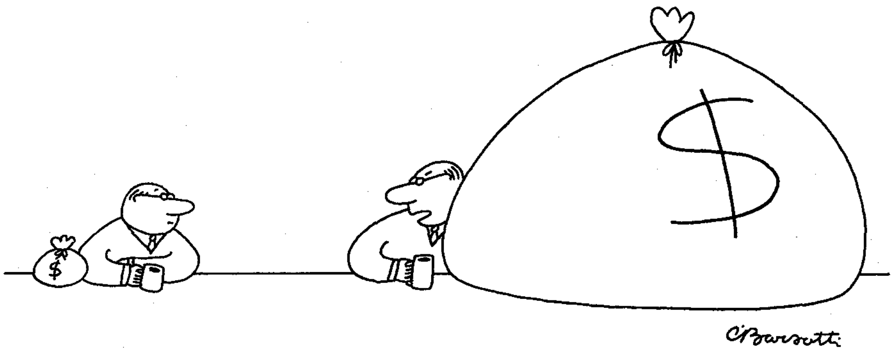
As a result, all immigration from Japan was ended. (Chinese had been excluded since 1882.) Immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe was reduced to a fraction of its former level; Jewish immigration was cut nearly to zero, with no allowances made for political refugees. No one then had a glimmer of the tragic consequences that ensued just over a decade later, when the Nazi government, taking American racial and sterilization laws as a model, went beyond anything that Osborn or even Grant had foreseen—although Stoddard lived to become a minion of Goebbels. When the bill was passed, Osborn wrote to congratulate Johnson on one of the most important steps "in the whole history of our country." Boas was back in the *Times* before the end of the month, under headlines reading "SCIENTISTS AT ODDS ON SUPERIOR RACE" and "NORDIC CLAIMS DISMISSED." But he knew that he could no longer fight alone.

"We used to argue vigorously as to whether or not Jews had a 'chromosome' for social justice," Margaret Mead recalled of evenings after her Barnard classes, when she and her friends would make cardboard signs for an endless sequence of meetings and liberal speakers. Mead had gone to Barnard as a sophomore, in the fall of 1920, starved for "the life of the mind," and she discovered it most vividly during her senior year in the classes of Franz Boas: the first teacher "who elicited my total respect." At sixty-two, Boas extended warm paternal feelings toward his students—the closest called him Papa Franz—but he was nevertheless an intimidating figure: surgery for cancer had left him with half of his sabre-scarred face paralyzed (Mead thought that from the other side he still looked like a handsome young man) and had made his heavily accented speech even more difficult to understand. Yet he was lecturing constantly, writing streams of articles, toiling for causes ranging from the N.A.A.C.P. to the devastated postwar Berlin Philharmonic, and supervising a small number of students in a series of carefully coordinated projects that amounted to a comprehensive attack on the biologically fixated status quo.

The first generation of Boasians had been launched: Robert Lowie (whose book "Primitive Society" helped convert the young Claude Lévi-Strauss to anthropology) and Alfred Kroeber (whose social vision animated the novels of his daughter Ursula Le Guin) had gone off to teach at Berkeley. They concentrated on the preservation of American Indian cultures—at Columbia, Boas had adapted his hopes for a museum-funded "vanishing tribes" project to the work of individual students—but the new generation had wider prospects in mind. Melville Herskovits was determined to study African culture despite prevailing wisdom that the subject didn't exist. (He went on to found the first department of African studies in America, at Northwestern University.) Ruth Benedict set out to study Indian ethics. And to Mead, at twenty-three, Boas assigned the youth-obsessed twenties' hot topic of adolescence. Mead accepted the assignment but refused to work among the Western tribes, who had been studied so often by then that every Indian family was reputed to include an anthropologist. She insisted on going to the more exclusive territory of the Samoan Islands, and the fact that this geographic shift required no change in subject shows how deeply Boas had become involved

STAND CLEAR BY MARK ALAN STAMATY


PLEASE SWIPE 28 MORE TIMES
MARK ALAN STAMATY
NY



"Where'd you get that?"

with a single overarching idea, embodied in the question that he posed for Mead: "Are the disturbances which vex our adolescents due to the nature of adolescence itself or to civilization?"

Nature or nurture? Galton had lifted the terms from Prospero's description of Caliban ("A devil, a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick") and, like Prospero, he came down hard on the side of biological destiny. His view gained wide support when, at the turn of the century, the physical mechanisms of heredity began to come to light, with the recognition of Mendel's laws of dominant and recessive genes, and with the shattering news that acquired traits cannot under any circumstances be inherited; that is, our genetic material is sealed off from everything we learn. This discovery was a catastrophe for liberals who believed in the human capacity for development, and many thinkers (including Freud) refused to accept it as final. Boas had the wisdom not to attempt a refutation—there was, of course, no science that would support such an attempt—yet his data about immigrant children had opened minds to possibilities that less "scientific" claims would not have inspired. The project he gave to Mead had similar implications: the perturbations of puberty, like cranial structure, were accepted as a biological absolute.

At the same time that Boas obtained a stipend for Mead, he won Herskovits enough money to study African-American physiognomy—more skulls—on the streets of New York. By 1925, Harlem's population was verging on two hundred thousand; the great migration from the South and the closing of the gates to intruders from overseas made it possible at last for Boas to fund a study of the "African physique," as Du Bois had requested two decades before. In May, 1925, Mead, preparing for her trip, agreed to sublet her Morningside Heights apartment to Herskovits. It is a sign of how entangled the problems of the here and now were with the group's exotic anthropological horizons that she had to renege on the offer and extend frantic apologies upon learning that her "race-discriminating tenement" did not rent to Jews.

While Mead was interrogating Samoan girls about their sex lives, the newest member of Boas's brigade in New York, Zora Neale Hurston, was learning to measure heads. Hurston had enrolled at Barnard just after Mead left, in the fall of 1925, on a scholarship she won by dazzling a school trustee at a dinner for promising "New Negro" writers. Adept in the lyrical speech of her all-black Florida home town, and gifted with a cajoling wit, Hurston was strikingly qualified to make the "good collections of Negro folklore, and particularly of Negro song," that Boas had long wanted—not just the content but the nuances of style and meaning that only an insider could catch. The task would require that Hurston return to the South as soon as she finished her courses. In the meantime, she made the ideal street-side researcher for Herskovits's study of Negro physiognomies: who else, as her friend Langston Hughes pointed out, would have had the nerve?

And so, for much of the summer of 1926, Hurston stood on a Harlem street corner with a large pair of calipers, asking passersby for permission to measure their skulls. Although I.Q. tests had begun to replace head measurements as a means of racial classification—and Boas was already studying bias in the tests—the methods of physical anthropology had not changed. Hurston's job was to measure families, and deduce the effects of the new urban environment with mathematical precision. Although Boas's files contain several letters from the laboratory that produced the specialized measuring instruments—head-spanners, spreading and sliding calipers, anthropometers, and something called a Gleitzirkel—informing him of continual delays due to "inconceivable, exasperating and very numerous difficulties" in calibration, he betrayed no hint of concern. Either he believed in the inevitable recurrence of the kind of changes he had found sixteen years before or he knew—as most scientists involved with measuring heads had always known—that numbers were produced by theories, and not the other way around.

His own numbers had received an unexpected scientific explanation, and from an emphatically unbiased source. Writing in a German eugenics textbook, Boas's friendly colleague Eugen Fischer—whom he had cited in opposing Madison Grant—confirmed the findings of Boas's head study and, as a physician, suggested fluctuations in the endocrine system as a likely cause. Whatever his eugenical lapses, Fischer appeared to be holding up the better side of German science—in 1922, a competing German eugenics text featured a photograph of a bust of Grant—and when, in 1927, he wrote of his appointment to run the new Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, in Berlin, Boas welcomed an international partner in the essential investigation of "the influence of environment upon bodily form."

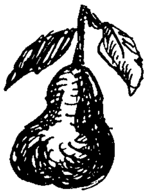
Heredity or culture? In the twenties, people were discovering that they lived in a culture—movies, pop songs, bestsellers—the way Molière's Bourgeois Gentilhomme discovered that he had always been speaking prose. Negro culture? American culture? It was the Great War, of course, that had shaken belief in a monolithic European culture that had failed to avert the European savagery.

Although Boas argued for the recognition of plural cultures, he suggested not that all human achievements were equal—he was too imbued with Beethoven and Schiller—but that the range of intelligence and virtue ran the gamut about equally in every group. Thus each person can be judged only as an individual. The challenge that remained was to demonstrate the power of culture in shaping lives. It was nature versus nurture with the scales reset: against our sealed-off genes, there was our accumulation of collective knowledge; in place of inherited learning, there was the social transmission of that knowledge from generation to generation. "Culture" was experience raised to scientific status. And it combined with biology to create mankind. Boas sent his students off to learn how the delicate balance worked. And then Margaret Mead came home and wrote a best-seller that turned American culture upside down.

With an introduction by Boas and a cover showing a bare-breasted girl rushing to a tryst with her lover beneath tropical palms, "Coming of Age in Samoa," published in 1928, was both an aphrodisiac and a call to arms. By ignoring Mead's rather harsh criticism of the nonsexual aspects of island life ("A low-grade moron," she wrote, "would not be hopelessly handicapped in Samoa") and dwelling on her tales of teen-age girls choosing strings of lovers with lighthearted ease, Americans conspired in the fantasy of a society in which there was no adolescent angst, no unhappy marriage, no jealousy, no Oedipus complex, and no emotional suffering of any kind. The utopian aspects of Mead's book were as gratefully seized on as the sex: if nurture could so conclusively trump nature, then we, too, could be anything we wished—sexually free, unneurotic, even happy—just by changing the cultural rules. Mead confessed to her publisher that she had pushed speculation "to the limit of permissibility," and critics have since claimed that she pushed it well beyond, blaming Boas for teaching her—and, by extension, millions of readers—to see human possibilities that are not there.

Although Boas had not expected such extreme results, Mead's utopia served as another welcome tool to persuade people of human malleability. The eugenicists' immigration victory had been followed, in 1927, by a triumph in the Supreme Court, when Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes approved compulsory sterilization for "unfit" citizens with the famous words "Three generations of imbeciles are enough." (Like Mead's "low-grade moron," Holmes's "imbeciles" derived from supposedly precise categories established by the new I.Q. tests; that year, hospitals throughout the country began to perform the operations.) Against such legal sanction, Mead's case for culture seemed to amount to little more than paper and ink, as did Boas's own attempt to reach a popular audience with a book entitled "Anthropology and Modern Life" (1928), in which he argued that culture—"the community of emotional life that rises from our everyday habits"—was more significant than race or origin in building a nation.

This marked the culmination of a lifetime of arguments, and, at seventy, Boas was wearing down. Two of his children had died in quick succession: musical Gertrud, of polio, in 1924, and Heinrich—sweet "Huckleberry Finn"-loving Henry—in a railroad accident the following year. In 1929, Boas's wife, Marie ("Mama Franz" to his students), was hit by a car while he was at a conference in Chicago, and died before he could get home. The following Christmas, Boas returned to his Northwest Indian haunts, writing to his son Ernst that he could not bear his empty house. He spent summers in Germany; his sisters were alarmed by the number of votes being cast for the Nazis, but he clearly thought that sense would prevail. Was there less reason to have faith in Germany than in America? Hitler had written admiringly of U.S. immigration policy in "Mein Kampf," but the Germans had passed no national or racial immigration restrictions; German eugenicists had gained government approval only for a program of consensual sterilization. Who could have been sure, as the thirties began, which of these economically plummeting nations would go racially mad?



The Third International Congress of Eugenics was held at the American Museum of Natural History in August, 1932. Those curators who might have protested lacked either the power or the will to do so. Henry Fairfield Osborn had been president for twenty-four years, and under his aegis enormous treasures had accumulated, in a physical area more than twice the museum's original size: an ornate marble entrance in honor of Teddy Roosevelt was being planned, and the new Hall of African Mammals, with its central procession of elephants—a tour de force by the taxidermic genius Carl Akeley—made as thrilling a spectacle as the ever-beloved dinosaurs. In the midst of this edifying people's palace, an exhibit related to the conference displayed photographs of native Africans designed to reveal their "racial backwardness," posters listing U.S. anti-miscegenation laws, charts illustrating the inheritability of antisocial behavior, and other eugenicist toys.

Boas stayed in Germany all that summer. He published a brochure based on a speech that he had given at his alma mater in Kiel, entitled "Race and Culture." In Berlin, he encouraged his old friend Eugen Fischer to prepare a study of the "changes in head index" of local descendants of East European Jews, presumably to demonstrate their degree of assimilation. Back at home in the fall, suffering from a weak heart, he carried out from his bedside various battles for the rights of Canadian Indians and for the Scottsboro Boys. He was too frail to go to meetings, or to keep charge of the department at Columbia. Mead later wrote that these might well have been his final months had it not been for Hitler's assumption of power, in January, 1933, which roused a sense of anger so tremendous that the old man rose from his bed and, as she put it, "flung himself back into the world."

Even before 1933, Boas had recognized that the Nazi movement was, as the historian Léon Poliakov has written, "an episode in the history of anthropology," and that the way to break its political grip was to refute its science. To this end, he became a whirlwind of production: pamphlets distributed in the German underground, a trip to confront Nazi representatives at a Paris conference in 1937 (he was nearly eighty), a long series of articles—and an even longer series of desperate letters seeking employment for anyone, it seems, who could get out. He asked Einstein to help an émigré dentist complete his training. (Einstein sent a check.) Boas's sisters and their families managed to escape, but when his old teacher from the Jewish school in Minden asked for help there was nothing he could do; the quota was filled, he was told, for a long time to come.

The ideas he was fighting were all too familiar. One of the first pieces of Nazi legislation, passed in June, 1933, was the Law for Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring, a sterilization law virtually copied from the model that a Galton Society member, Harry H. Laughlin, had drawn up while serving as the House of Representatives' Expert Eugenics Agent. The debt was acknowledged by proud eugenicists of both countries. By now, though, the American movement was coming apart. Boas's students were finally approaching a kind of critical mass, with "cultural anthropologists" heading all the major university departments and most professional organizations in the country. These were the voices that newspapers quoted and that people wanted to hear, as the Depression led many Americans to realize that poverty was not a hereditary flaw and that anyone might fall to the bottom of the heap. In 1931, Boas was elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt won the Presidential election with a campaign based on optimistic strength—the opposite of the doom-crying eugenicist credo—and on concern for the country's "forgotten men."

Madison Grant, feeling the momentum ebb, decided to write another book, and "The Conquest of a Continent," with an introduction by Osborn, was published by Scribners in 1933. The publicity stated that Grant, like "Herr Hitler" in Germany, offered important national solutions. Boas protested, again citing the research of Eugen Fischer; but this time Grant was virtually ignored. *Foreign Affairs* dismissed the book in four words: "Science submerged by opinion." Ruth Benedict, in the *Herald Tribune*, called it "a trifle ridiculous," and barely distinguishable from Nazi propaganda—which is what it soon became. Public revulsion against Nazi doctrine ultimately finished off the eugenics movement; in 1936 Boas appeared on the cover of *Time*, a national hero.

The only change in the German edition of Grant's book, issued in 1937, was the inclusion of an introduction by Eugen Fischer, in which he attacked "the Jewish anthropologist and ethnologist, Franz Boas," and asserted that racial characteristics were inalterable and "the sole determining basis of history." Fischer turned out to be an excellent example of how the human soul may change under pressure of a new environment. His early liberal opinions caused Nazi officials to withhold Party membership until 1940, but he proved his new loyalties in countless ways: as head of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, which Boas had welcomed two decades before, he directed "racial hygiene" courses for S.S. doctors, provided expert testimony on life-or-death issues of racial heritage, and oversaw experiments in genetic pathology, focussing particularly on twins. On his retirement, in 1942, Boas's onetime hope for German science left the institute to his handpicked successor, Otmar von Verschuer, and to Verschuer's former graduate student Josef Mengele.

At a time when every theoretical barrier between the barbarous and the civilized was collapsing—confirming Boas's rejection of cultural hierarchies in a way that broke his heart—New York was seeing fewer immigrants arrive than in any period since the eighteen-thirties. The only expandable if unofficial quota was for those exceptionally accomplished individuals who were able to inspire heroic efforts of patronage, paperwork, and endurance. The young anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss met the Surrealist potentate André Breton on what Lévi-Strauss called a "convict ship" (seven beds, hundreds of desperate passengers) sailing to New York in the spring of 1941. Lévi-Strauss—a rabbi's grandson who owed his American "invitation" largely to Robert Lowie—was soon scouting Third Avenue antique shops with Breton and Max Ernst (whose son had been sponsored in America by Boas) in search of the "primitive art" prized by anthropologists and Surrealists alike. But Boas was the first person Lévi-Strauss wanted to meet in America, and before long he was part of the Columbia circle as well. The first exercise in the comparative method of French Structuralism was Lévi-Strauss's probing of the correspondences between his groups of friends—the masks, the myths, the roots of language—and its first manifestation the articles he began to publish in New York. The movement really ought to have been called Manhattan Structuralism.

When Lévi-Strauss made his way to the Northwest Coast Hall at the American Museum of Natural History, it had heard hardly a footstep in decades. The whole museum had lost its lustre: money for expeditions had long ago dried up, and after Osborn's retirement, in 1933—he died in 1935, after a blissful tour through Nazi Germany—the place seemed adrift. But for Lévi-Strauss the hall was a sleeping kingdom, waiting to be reclaimed. "There is in New York a magic place where all the dreams of childhood hold a rendezvous, where century old tree trunks sing or speak," he wrote in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1943. He compared the hall's totem poles to the pillars of a temple in a poem by Baudelaire; the disquieting masks evoked Chartres, mixed with Halloween. Beyond aesthetics, Lévi-Strauss was moved to write of the "carnal bond" he felt with the work of these people, whose numbers were so small in relation to their achievements, and of their tragic near-extinction. The unspoken entanglements of the modern anthropologist have never seemed more poignant. Lévi-Strauss soon settled down to write a book—his first major work—about "kinship structure" in cultures ranging from the Kwakiutl to the Chinese, even as his own kinship ties kept him in racial exile, and his own culture was annihilating the people who truly shared his carnal bond.

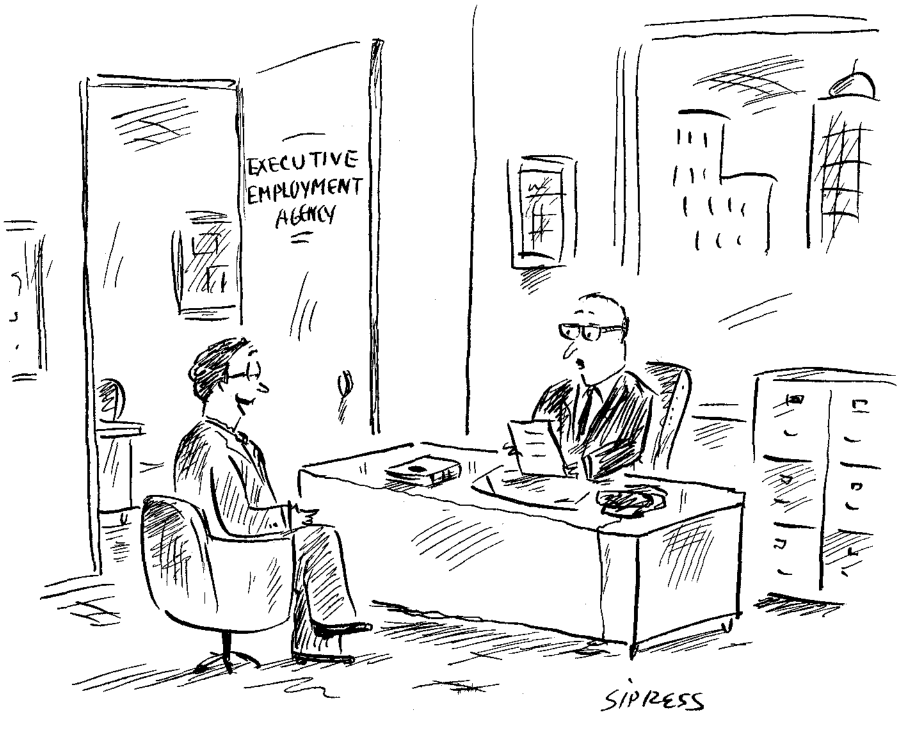
On a freezing day in December, 1942, Boas, aged eighty-four, hosted a luncheon at the Columbia Faculty Club for the French anthropologist Paul Rivet, an old friend whose anti-Fascist activities had forced him to flee Paris just ahead of arrest. Lévi-Strauss, who sat beside Boas, described him arriving wearing a fur hat that looked as though it dated from his time with the Eskimos, sixty years before. There was wine, and talk of earlier days and of the war. Boas had reportedly just uttered the words "I have a new theory about race" when he suffered a heart attack and toppled backward in his chair. It was Lévi-Strauss who bent to lift him up, making for a nearly winged allegory of intellectual transference. Rivet, a former military doctor, pronounced the old man dead.

Boas died without knowing how the war would end, or what would become of the country that won its magnificent victory with an Army still segregated by race. "It is an arduous work that is before you," he had warned Du Bois's students at Atlanta University in 1906. "Do not let your path deviate from the quiet and steadfast insistence on full opportunities for your powers." Nearly half a century later, when the Supreme Court, in the case of Brown v. Board of Education, unanimously overrode its "separate but equal" decision and ordered the racial integration of public schools, Boas's ideas were fully present in the courtroom. Thurgood Marshall's winning argument for the N.A.A.C.P. relied on testimony about the effects of segregation on Negro children by the sociologist Kenneth B. Clark, who had trained with Boas at Columbia. Chief Justice Warren's decision cited Gunnar Myrdal's comprehensive 1944 volume "An American Dilemma," which derived its account of racial history from studies that Myrdal had commissioned from Melville Herskovits, Ashley Montagu—doctorate from Boas, 1937—and other Boas disciples. Precise credit for the historic reversal was assigned by angry segregationists, who decried the overpowering influence of "the Boas cult" and claimed that "the ghost of Boas" had served as a powerful tenth justice on the Court.

In New York City, straight through the nineteen-fifties, schoolchildren packed off on trips to the American Museum of Natural History were shown displays of "human races by linear arrays running from apes to whites," as Stephen Jay Gould—who was one of those children—recalled. But change was coming even to the House of Osborn, under curators like William K. Gregory, Margaret Mead, and, finally, Gould himself, who was seduced by the dinosaurs of Central Park West into becoming a paleontologist, and who, as Honorary Curator of Paleontology, demonstrated that punctilious Darwinian science was fully compatible with Boasian ethics.

The museum's dark old days have been erased. Osborn is now remembered more for introducing the nation to the *T. rex* than for his racial politics. Madison Grant is memorialized in a display of Alaskan caribou that bear his name—*Rangifer arcticus granti*—but hardly anyone knows anymore who he was. (A scrupulous dissertation by Jonathan Peter Spiro awaits a publisher. Boas, although lacking a full biography, has been studied by many superb scholars, among them George W. Stocking, Jr., Douglas Cole, Ira Jacknis, Julia E. Liss, Lee D. Baker, and Aldona Jonaitis.) Sixty years after Boas's death, the museum is so much his institution, ethically speaking, and so fully reflects the city that has grown around it, ethnically speaking, that its current curator of anthropology, David Thomas, was the first to publicly express shock and pain when the *Times* revealed, in October, 2002, that Boas's foundational 1911 head-study findings had been declared erroneous, and that Boas stood accused of shading his data to achieve the desired results.

It was hardly the first such allegation. This time, two anthropologists restudying Boas's records—more than five hundred pages of figures, which he published in 1928—announced that the effects of the new environment were "insignificant" and the differences between the children of immigrants born in America and those born in Europe "negligible in comparison to the differentiation between ethnic groups." Boas himself had noted the smallness of the changes observed; the shock at the time was that there was any change at all. Seizing on the charges, Boas's traditional political opponents were merrily issuing cries of "scientific fraud" when, in 2003, another group of anthropologists restudying the data refuted the indictment, announcing that "on the whole, Boas got it right" about the transforming effects of environment on biology. Nearly a century after Boas's original study, the contesting experts are still arguing about head shape and its implications for the human ability to grow beyond categorically fixed—racially, ethnically fixed—limits. Boas was uncontestably right, however, about the social and cultural potential of the human beings he studied, an explosive potential for which his millimetre-thin findings served as a sign and a promise, and which his life's work helped to fulfill. American society has been reaping the benefits for decades. So let them argue. Let the anthropologists argue, let the politicians argue, let even the bigots argue. It's a free country—in part, thanks to Boas. Thanks to him, even if the heads did not change in a significant way, the world did. ♦



"I've got some skills—I'm just not sure they add up to a 'set.'"

A REPORTER AT LARGE

THE CASUALTY

An American soldier comes home from Iraq.

BY DAN BAUM

When people talk about the Army being good for a certain kind of young man, it's boys like Michael Cain they have in mind. Tall and lean, with a sweet smile and doll's eyes, Michael spent his high-school years searching fitfully for the disciplined achiever within him. His home, a converted schoolhouse that his parents rented amid the dairy pastures and cornfields outside Berlin, Wisconsin, was a loving if unruly place, noisy with two little sisters and cluttered with the winter coats, boots, and other items it takes to keep a family going in the rural Midwest. Michael's mother, Charlene, a sturdy woman with a broad, pretty face, earned most of the family income as a clerk in a Winnebago County mental-health clinic, forty-five minutes away. His father, Kenneth, a heavyset former machinist disabled by back pain, kept llamas in the back yard as a hobby. Michael loafed through school in his early teens, playing sousaphone in the marching band and clowning around in class. He liked to watch professional wrestling on TV. In his junior year, though, he found himself thinking that Berlin, population fifty-three hundred, looked small. Envisioning a career in computers, he bore down on his schoolwork and got decent grades, but then he seemed to lose interest in the prospect of going to college.

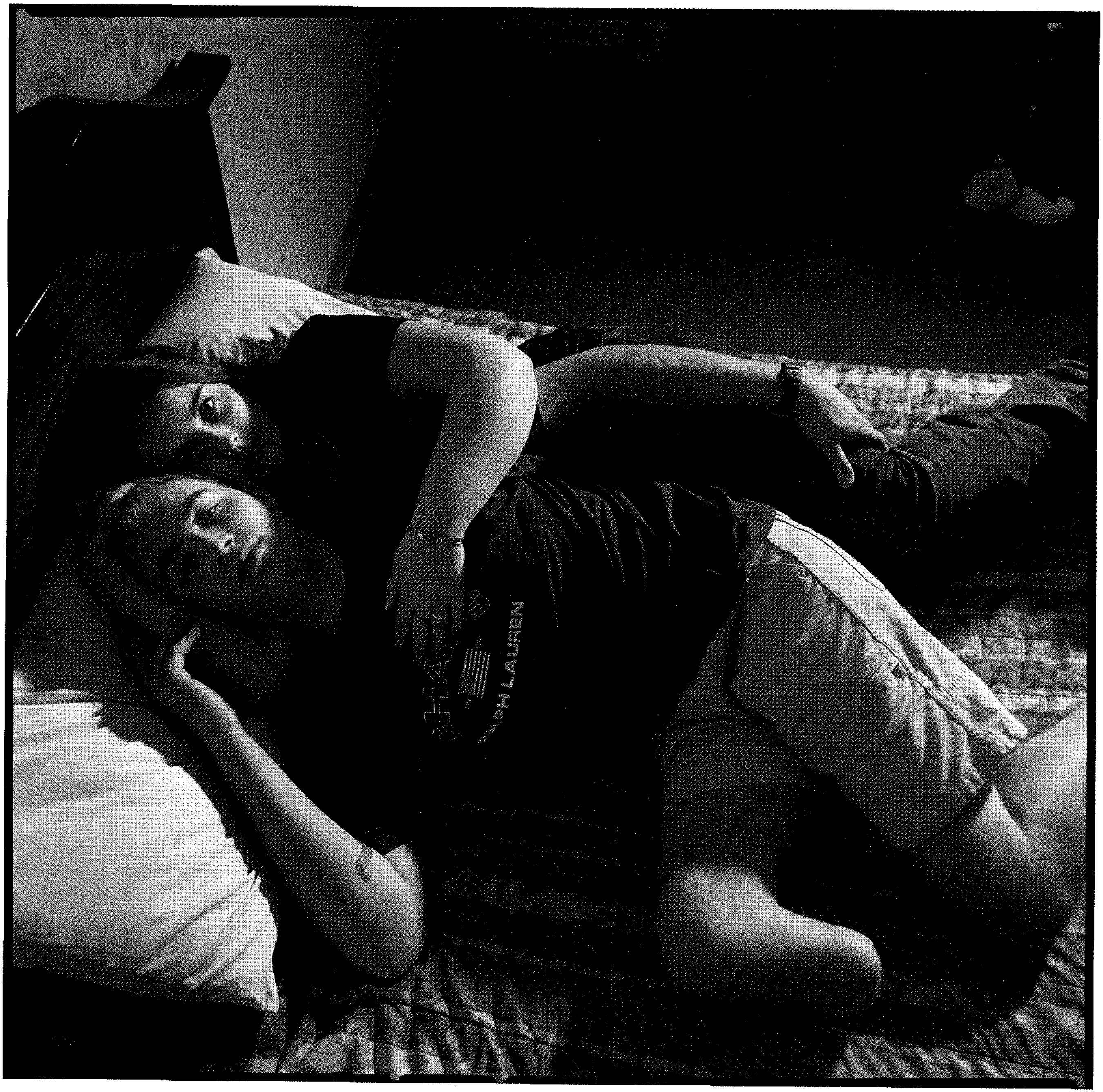
Graduation, in 1999, marooned him. Having no clear idea what to do, Michael took a job stocking shelves at Wal-Mart. Within months, the thrill of adulthood had faded to a dreary routine of unpacking boxes under fluorescent lights and, after hours, gazing into the PlayStation 2 upstairs in his bedroom. In May of 2000, Michael drove forty minutes to an Army recruiting station in the Oshkosh City Center shopping mall and got the paperwork to sign up for a four-year hitch. Charlene first heard of her son's plans when he came home that night and asked for his birth certificate.

Charlene thought the military would be too tough for her easygoing son. "You hate having people tell you what to do," she told him. Though Michael was nineteen and parental consent wasn't required, the recruiter drove out to the Cains' house to sit at the kitchen table among the canned goods and wrestling magazines and show her on his laptop the range of Army opportunities. "Are you sure you want to do this?" Charlene kept asking Michael as the recruiter, in crisp dress greens, sat stiffly between them. The laptop glowed with images of men flying helicopters and driving tanks. Less than a week later, Michael Cain was at the induction center in Milwaukee with a gym bag in his hand.

To Charlene's amazement, Michael thrived under military discipline. The unity of purpose, the clarity of authority, and the hard physical work all gave him hope of becoming the man he wanted to be—serious, competent, respected. His biggest gripe in calls home was that other soldiers were insufficiently respectful to the drill sergeant—a complaint that left his mother speechless. His score on the Army entrance exam wasn't high enough to get him into electronics, but it qualified him to be an "eighty-eight mike"—a truck driver. For Private Cain, barrelling along in a thirty-eight-thousand-pound transport at highway speeds was more fun than arranging displays of toaster ovens. He twice wrote to his recruiter, describing how he was getting his "ass kicked" so hard he'd lost twenty-eight pounds, but also to thank him for helping him "fulfill a life long dream, being AN AMERICAN SOLDIER!!!" After basic, he was sent to Vicenza, Italy, and spent two years driving trucks and taking parachute training in order to get his jump wings. The Army worked its traditional alchemy. Michael rose smoothly to the rank of specialist and was sent to Fort Hood, Texas. He met an attractive woman named Leslie Lantz, who worked at a Denny's restaurant in the nearby town of Killeen, and they began seeing each other. On April 1st of last year, Cain departed for Kuwait, and left in her care his most precious possession—a new Dodge Ram pickup.

Two decorations hold particular fascination for soldiers who are shipping out. The Combat Infantryman Badge, or C.I.B., is awarded for spending at least sixty days under fire. The Purple Heart goes to soldiers wounded by enemy action. Together, they mean that a soldier has experienced the essence of warfare. What soldiers want when they envision the Purple Heart is to get shot, patched up, and returned to their platoons in one piece. When Cain left for Iraq, he knew he'd get his C.I.B. But he also boasted to his mother that he'd win a Purple Heart.

Assigned to the 299th Engineer Battalion in Tikrit, Cain took command of a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck—or "hemmit"—a monstrous land schooner that rides on eight four-foot-tall tires and hauls everything from gasoline to tampons. The battalion was comfortably billeted in an unfinished palace that had belonged to one of Saddam Hussein's brothers-in-law, with rows of Army cots spread out under soaring arches. Twice a day, Cain and Specialist Keisha Duff, a twenty-seven-year-old eighty-eight mike from Humboldt, Tennessee, drove rations and water to soldiers camped two miles south on the four-lane road the Army calls Highway One. Cain impressed his company commander, Captain James Blain, as a particularly enthusiastic soldier, always ready to grab an M249 machine gun and volunteer for dangerous missions. Cain, the Captain wrote me, "was ready to rock and roll," and was in the process of being promoted to ser-



Sergeant Michael Cain and his fiancée, Leslie Lantz, in a hotel near Walter Reed hospital. Photograph by Mary Ellen Mark.

geant. The unit never had quite enough water. But for that—and for having to wear a sixteen-pound flak vest, web gear laden with ammunition, and a four-pound Kevlar helmet in the hundred-plus heat—Cain considered Tikrit easy duty, with plenty of time to watch movies and play video games. He liked hanging around the battalion aid station, a tent with a couple of gurneys, swapping CDs and DVDs with Private First Class George Blohm and Private First Class Jeremy Brown, a pair of "ninety-one whiskeys"—medics.

August 10th was a Sunday. At 9:40 A.M., Duff took the wheel of the hemmit and Cain the shotgun seat. A Humvee mounted with an M249 led the hemmit out of the palace compound, and another fell in behind. The vehicles lumbered up the short gravel road to Highway One. A hemmit's cab extends several feet ahead of the front tires, and Cain recalls it swinging out over the blacktop of the highway as the truck made its turn. It is his last memory of Iraq.

Medics Brown and Blohm were sitting in the aid station when their master sergeant ran in to report a possible casualty out on the highway. Medics no longer wear big red crosses on their helmets; during the Second World War, they suffered high losses because they were easy to pick off. Nowadays they look and dress like other soldiers, down to the weaponry, and address each other as "soldier-medic," with the emphasis on "soldier." Their primary mission is that of any warrior, which, as the Soldier's Creed puts it, is to "engage and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat." Often the first thing a medic will do for a wounded soldier is shoot back, in order to protect him. Brown grabbed a rifle and a thirty-pound aid bag, Blohm took a stretcher, and together they raced toward a greasy cloud of smoke rising up from the highway.

They could see at once that the hemmit had hit a mine; the enormous right front wheel was gone and the cab was crumpled. Blood, shiny oil, and bright-green engine coolant made a mess on the tarmac. Soldiers had ringed the scene and were pointing their rifles into the desert; mine strikes are frequently overtures to ambush. Keisha Duff had been thrown clear of the driver's seat and was being rolled onto a stretcher. Jagged chunks of the cab were embedded in her arm, and she had a bad burn under her flak jacket. Screams echoed from the hemmit's twisted cab; Blohm glanced inside. "Oh, shit," he remembers thinking. "It's my friend." In addition to having to duck and return fire while administering aid, combat medics, unlike their civilian counterparts, often find themselves wrist-deep in the hot ruined flesh of their best friends.

Cain's right leg was a mangled slab of splintered bone and stringy red muscles; Blohm knew it couldn't be saved. Both knees were visibly dislocated. The left thigh was twisted at a bad angle, indicating a broken femur, and the leg appeared both seared and flayed. Cain was shrieking in agony and panic. Brown, the senior medic on the scene, climbed up into the cab with him.

The clock was running fast on what medics call "the golden hour"—the first sixty minutes after injury, when timely treatment can determine whether a soldier lives or dies. As recently as the Persian Gulf War, in 1991, the most highly trained medics were held behind the front lines at battalion aid stations. Front-line combat medics had neither the training nor the equipment, for example, to insert an airway tube into a patient's throat. And, while they carried I.V. bags of plasma, they knew little of medication beyond morphine. Modern desert warfare involves such swift travel, though, that soldiers in a forty-m.p.h. Bradley fighting vehicle can quickly move beyond the reach of an aid station. And, in the kind of "asymmetric warfare" the Army finds itself conducting in Iraq, there are no "lines" anymore. In the nineteen-eighties, the Army Medical Command decided that every soldier would carry his or her own wound dressing; today, it is a big cotton pad that can absorb about half a litre of blood. Each thirteen-soldier squad has at least one "combat lifesaver," a soldier with additional first-aid training who carries tourniquets, extra dressings, and maybe a few I.V. bags. Field soldier-medics like Brown and Blohm get the same level of training that used to be reserved for rear-echelon sergeant-medics—sixteen weeks of advanced first aid, drug mathematics, and training in invasive procedures like airway and nasal-gastric tubes and urinary catheters. One medic is usually assigned to every twenty-five-to-thirty-man combat platoon.

Brown resisted the impulse to move straight to the glaring red wounds, and instead snapped into protocols. Doing his best to ignore Cain's shrieking, he did an ABC check on his friend—airway, breathing, and circulation. Then he, Blohm, and two other medics lifted Cain out of the shattered cab and laid him on a litter. Cain wasn't in danger of bleeding to death; the bubbly, malodorous burns caused by the blast had cauterized his arteries. Though the pain was obviously horrible, Brown gave Cain no morphine, because he knew that he would be heading for immediate surgery and wanted him lucid enough to sign surgical-consent papers.

Soldiers speak to each other in a stream of acronyms and abbreviations that are incomprehensible to civilians but essential when shouting complex information over the din of battle. After the ABC check, Brown and Blohm ran through DCAP-BTLS—an inventory of deformities, contusions, abrasions, punctures/penetrations, burns, tenderness, lacerations, and swelling. Then they palpated Cain's body in a limb-by-limb TIC, or a search for tenderness, instability, and crepitation (bone grinding on bone). They did a CCT, checking for color, condition, and temperature of Cain's skin; and a PMS—pulse, motor, and sensory—check. They found no circulation in the right leg and a weak and inconsistent—"thready"—pulse in the left.

Cain was writhing and crying, and as Blohm and Brown worked they tried to calm him with stock assurances—"You'll be fine," "Everything's O.K."—and jokes about attractive women soldiers in the battalion. When they finished checking vital signs, they turned to Cain's obvious injuries, wrapping what Blohm called the "mush" of the right leg in bandages, splinting both legs. Supporting their friend's head, they rolled him on his side and discovered that his left buttock was half torn off, the flesh laced with rough bits of the truck cab.

An M113 personnel carrier-cum-ambulance—a steel box on tracks—rumbled up. The medics loaded Cain

A LITTLE GIRL TUGS AT THE TABLECLOTH

She's been in this world for over a year,
and in this world not everything's been examined
and taken in hand.

The subject of today's investigation
is things that don't move by themselves.

They need to be helped along,
shoved, shifted,
taken from their place and relocated.

They don't all want to go, e.g. the bookshelf,
the cupboard, the unyielding walls, the table.

But the tablecloth on the stubborn table
—when well-seized by its hems—
manifests a willingness to travel.

And the glasses, plates,
creamer spoons, bowl
are fairly shaking with desire.

It's fascinating,
what form of motion will they take,
once they're trembling on the brink:
will they roam across the ceiling?
fly around the lamp?
hop onto the windowsill and from there to a tree?

Mr. Newton still has no say in this.
Let him look down from the heavens and wave his hands.

This experiment must be completed.
And it will.

—*Wislawa Szymborska*

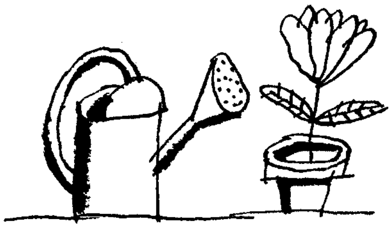
(Translated, from the Polish, by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh.)

aboard, and started an I.V. of lactated Ringer's, an electrolyte solution. An Army chaplain slipped in beside Cain. With Blohm holding the I.V. bag and Brown driving, they sped for a landing zone where a Black Hawk helicopter was waiting to take Cain to the 28th Combat Support Hospital—the modern-day equivalent of a MASH unit—in Baghdad. Thirty-four minutes had elapsed since the mine blast. Blohm was twenty-three years old. Brown, the senior medic, was twenty-four. Cain was twenty-two.

When an American soldier dies in Iraq, newspapers publish the name. When a soldier is wounded, the incident, if reported at all, is usually an aside. Names are rarely given. The wounding of Michael Cain wasn't newsworthy; a search of wire-service and *Times* stories for August 11th and 12th turns up little mention of the attack; the Associated Press reported that "four American soldiers were wounded in guerrilla attacks, including two at the Baghdad University complex and two others in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit. One U.S. soldier died of heat stroke and another was found dead in his living quarters on Sunday, the military said." The day after Cain and Duff were injured, the *Times* reported that Americans were suffering Iraq-war "news burnout."

The Defense Department publishes an online tally of American servicemen killed and wounded in Iraq, updating it every few days. As of February 25th, four hundred and forty-nine had been killed and two thousand four hundred and twenty wounded by hostile fire. The ratio of wounded soldiers to killed is higher in this war (a little more than five to one) than in the Second World War and Vietnam, probably because of body armor and advances in battlefield medicine. (In the Second World War, the ratio was a little more than two to one; by the time of Korea, it had risen to three to one, where it remained until last spring.)

By most American soldiers' accounts, the Iraqis are lousy shots. In any case, they know that the Americans are wearing body armor. Rather than trying to pierce shielded torsos with bullets, the Iraqis increasingly rely on blowing off the Americans' unprotected arms and legs with explosives: car bombs, mines, rocket-propelled grenades, and "improvised explosive devices," which are often old artillery shells that have been buried and then detonated from a distance by some kind of cheap commercial electronic device—a garage-door opener, say, or the joystick of a ten-dollar radio-controlled toy car. As of January 9th, sixty-six service people—almost all of them Army soldiers—had suffered amputation of a hand, a foot, an arm, or a leg. Of those, ten had lost more than one limb.



Cain was injured by an Italian plastic anti-vehicle mine about the size of a tin of butter cookies. (His friends found pieces of the mine afterward.) It would have been easy for someone to feign a flat tire and bury the device quickly in the soft sand at the point where Highway One and the packed-gravel road to the palace compound meet. Apparently, the hemmit did just what the saboteur was hoping. It cut the corner a hair too sharp and depressed the mine's detonator.

Kenneth Cain was at home when the call came from Fort Hood, two days after the blast. Kenneth is stout, with a big white beard that makes him look a little like Santa Claus. He called Charlene at work. The first thing she heard when she picked up the phone was her husband weeping. Then he told her that Michael had been seriously wounded.

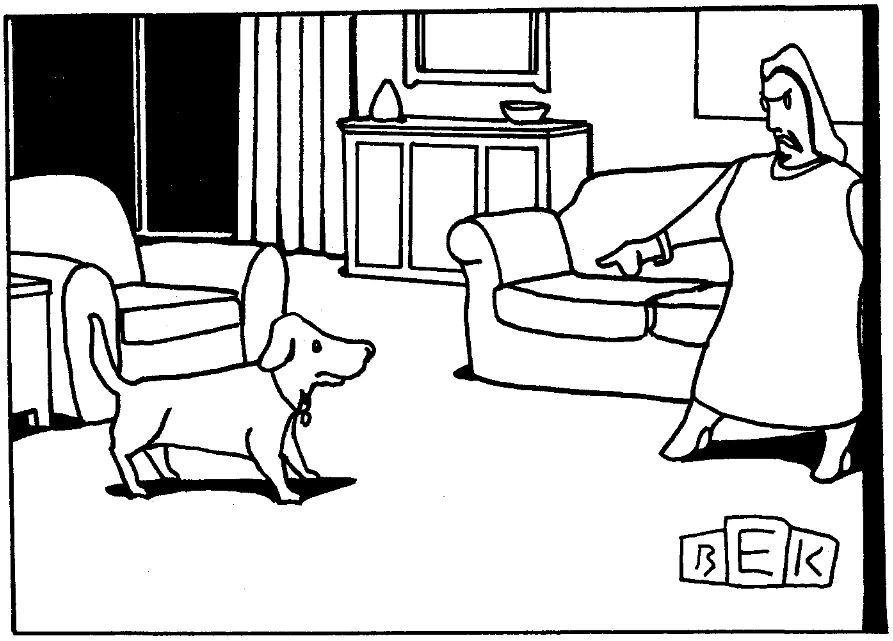
Cain was lying in a coma at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, in western Germany, where all Iraq-war casualties are taken. Doctors had amputated his right leg below the knee. The condition of the left leg was uncertain. Cain also had a smashed jaw, a broken thumb, a broken arm, and a wound on the back of his head. He'd lost a lot of blood. During the Second World War, families were lucky to get a telegram days or weeks after a son or a husband was hurt. In this war, the Army kept the Cains informed hour by hour; a major at Fort Hood called them five times in two days. Charlene was even able to speak by telephone with the doctor who was treating her son; she learned that they were about to try turning off life support, leaving it in place in case Cain didn't respond. When she called a second time, a nurse told her they'd switched it off and he'd started breathing on his own. The Fort Hood major was working on getting the Cains plane tickets to Germany when they learned that their son was being flown to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington, D.C.

Cain remembers none of this; other soldiers say that the trip from Landstuhl to Walter Reed is grim. Litters are loaded into the fuselage of an Air Force transport, which is made of aluminum and tends to be chilly. The roar of the engines barely masks the moaning and crying of the wounded. When a soldier dies en route, his body is simply covered with a sheet.

Walter Reed is a vast campus of red brick buildings in north-central Washington; its centerpiece is the main hospital, a gigantic edifice, which opened in 1977. It's a surprisingly cheerful building, with wide, airy halls and a determinedly upbeat staff. On August 17th, Cain opened his eyes. Finding himself in a hospital bed, he believed that he must be dreaming. A nurse asked him if he wanted anything. "McDonald's," he told her. Then his eyes travelled over the machines and tubes, and he said, "My mom and dad." As it happened, they'd just arrived.

Kenneth and Charlene had been flown to Washington at the Army's expense. They were shown to a room on Ward 57—the orthopedic ward, where amputees go—and found Michael with his head arched back in a high cervical collar. A tube full of "disgusting green fluid," as Charlene recalls it, ran from his nose. His thumb was in a cast, and a three-inch round scab covered the back of his head; a catheter snaked from under the covers, and an I.V. was attached to his arm. Charlene had to tell her son that his leg was gone. He glanced at the end of the bed, where only one foot tented the blanket, then stared at the ceiling for a long time. When they pulled back the covers, Kenneth and Charlene found that Michael's right leg ended in a bandaged stump. His left leg looked as though a dog had been chewing on it: long, crosshatched crimson scars ran up its sides and back. An instrument that Charlene called a "cheese grater" had been run over the skin graft, leaving a pattern of holes that allow the skin to expand and to cover the wounded area. A metal contraption that looked like a miniature offshore oil platform rose out of his left hip, and a big square of skin had been peeled from his upper thigh to provide a graft for the stump. Cain sent Kenneth and Charlene down to the gift shop for a disposable camera and had them take photographs of his gruesome injuries. He pasted them into a flowered "Special Memories" album that he has titled "My Accident in Iraq."

Outwardly, Michael was still Sergeant Cain, telling his parents he wanted only to go back to the 299th in Iraq. (Keisha Duff did in fact return to active duty in Iraq.) He felt responsible for his men. "War's war," he told his mother. "This one was a good thing; it gave people their freedom." But when Charlene told him that his cousin was thinking of joining the Army, he asked for the phone so he could talk him out of it. "He's crazy," Michael said. "I wouldn't let him go. He could end up like me."



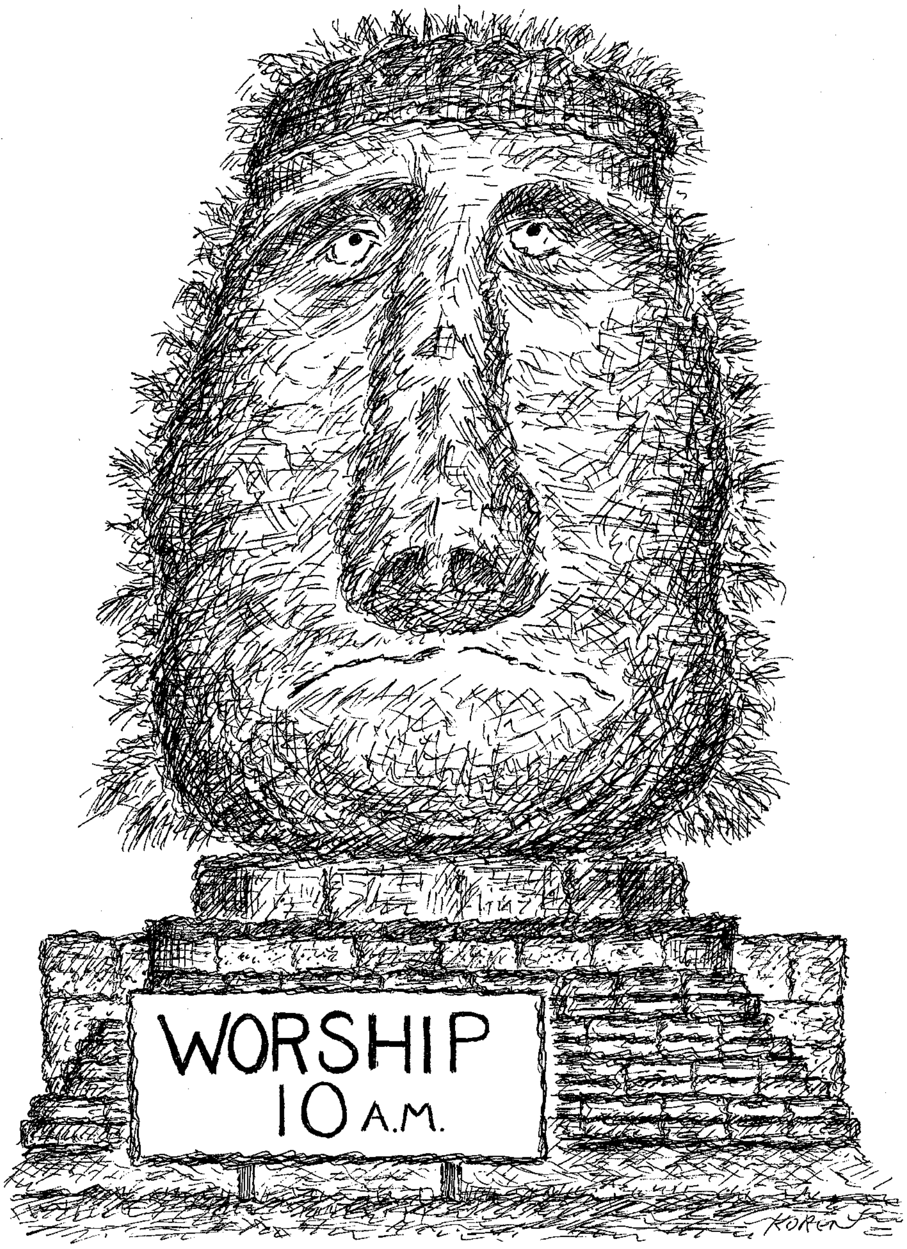
"Sit. Stay. Make up for everything that's wrong in my life."

A bomb injures in many ways. The shock wave can loosen organs and leave a victim to bleed to death internally, or rake him with shrapnel. Long after the initial wounds are treated, the effects of the bomb continue to plague the victim. In Cain's case, the blast pulverized dirt, truck metal, engine fluids, and his own clothing, and drove microscopic debris deep into his muscles, macerating the tissue. Each tiny fleck had to be dug out, the pulped flesh cut away, and the wounds cleaned and re-cleaned—a process that took twelve surgeries, over three months. (Had there been any people between him and the mine, their flesh might have been atomized and driven into his, which can cause particularly dangerous infections.)

Starting the day after he regained consciousness, Cain was in the care of Lieutenant Justin LaFerrier, an Army physical therapist whose bulging muscles, under a tight white coat, make him a walking advertisement for the active life. LaFerrier is in charge of many of the Iraq-war amputees at Walter Reed. While Cain was still undergoing surgeries to clean his wounds, LaFerrier had him wheeled most days to the physical-therapy room on the third floor. It's the size of a gymnasium, filled with bars, racks, and machines that look like torture instruments from the Middle Ages. An amputee, particularly one who has lost a leg, has to reëstablish his body's balance, and LaFerrier put Cain through hours of exercises to build up the muscles he'd need to operate crutches and a prosthesis. "Your core is your stable basis of support," LaFerrier, a Rhode Island native, explained to me. "When you take a step, you don't think about it. When an amputee does that, he has to first stabilize the residual limb in the socket. You have to train those muscles to do that." We watched a sweaty, gasping soldier who had lost both legs and one arm inch along the parallel bars in shiny, high-tech prosthetics. "I like to push them to the limit," LaFerrier said. "They're young. They're strong. I want to cause muscle soreness, but not the 'Ooh, I shouldn't have done that' pain. I take them as far as they can tolerate." The amputees call LaFerrier their "physical terrorist."

Although Charlene took all her sick days and vacation days and her co-workers donated a hundred hours of theirs, she and Kenneth eventually had to return to Wisconsin. After they left, Cain's warrior spirit drained away. One day, he refused to go to physical therapy, and when he was wheeled there against his will he was sullen and uncoöperative. Frequent phone calls from his men in Tikrit—another amenity unknown to casualties of earlier wars—would cheer him up for a few minutes, but then he'd start to miss them, and sink lower in spirits. Captain Blain sent his father and wife, both of whom live in the Washington area, to visit. Celebrities passed through, too—Cain met the actor Gary Sinise, who played a Vietnam War amputee in "Forrest Gump," and the country singer Shania Twain. One day, President Bush sat on the edge of his bed and asked him if he wanted anything. Cain told the President that his men needed water. When Cain spoke to them by phone two days later, they told him that they suddenly had more water than they could possibly use.

Still, Cain couldn't shake the feeling that he'd be stuck in a chair and useless the rest of his life. He was withdrawn, and continued to refuse physical therapy. The hospital finally asked Charlene to come back, figuring she could make him work for LaFerrier the way she'd once made him practice the sousaphone. She somehow found a way to take time off. Mothers are often asked to assist in the recovery process at Walter Reed, LaFerrier told me.



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I met Cain in December at Mologne House, a hotel on the Walter Reed campus for visiting families and for soldiers undergoing outpatient treatment, including physical therapy. The Federal style of the two-story lobby, with a gigantic chandelier and a grand staircase, belies the building's age; Mologne House opened in 1997. It is adamantly a hotel, not a medical facility. Its rooms are indistinguishable from, say, rooms at a Hilton, except that the bathroom cabinets frequently resemble pharmacy shelves, with doxycycline, Ambien, and Percocet nestling among Old Spice and Mega-Men dietary supplements. The Mologne House staff are upbeat and pleasant amid a high percentage of guests who are adjusting to blindness, facial scars, and missing limbs. They differ from the staff of an ordinary hotel only in their mandatory daily inspections of every room, a practice instituted in July as a suicide-prevention measure.

Cain was sitting on the edge of his unmade bed wearing shorts and a Packers jersey and cap, his naked stump jutting out. Saddam Hussein had been captured the night before and President Bush happened to be speaking on television, but Cain was absorbed by a hockey simulation on his PlayStation 2. He looked terrible—sallow and sunken-eyed, with a two-day stubble. He'd dyed his hair a garish chrome yellow. He kept shifting uncomfortably on his hollowed buttock. Every surface in the room was covered with CDs,

"Is this the spatula or the whisk?"

model airplanes, hockey magazines, Packers memorabilia, boxes of Frosted Mini-Wheats, and bags of Funyuns. Dirty laundry and candy wrappers were strewn on the floor. Cain's prosthesis, a white-and-magenta running shoe with a complicated steel-and-plastic ankle joint, rose like a tower from the rubble, a pattern of American flags decorating the calf-size plastic socket that fits his stump. He told me that he had no regrets, and that he would do it again if he could. Would he let his son join the Army? "Fuck no," he said. "I'd tell him, 'I'll beat the shit out of you if you try it.' "

Cain's girlfriend, Leslie Lantz, a muscular, dark-eyed beauty, who had arrived from Texas the week before, was flipping through "Portraits of War," a book of Iraq-war drawings published by Detroit Free Press. Charlene was making a halfhearted attempt to straighten the room. She had been there for three weeks, sleeping in the bed next to the one Cain shared with Leslie. "I knew Mom would come," Cain said sheepishly. "I quit doing everything, so they had to call her." I asked how it felt to have his mom in the bed next to his and Leslie's. He didn't answer directly. "It's nice having Mom here," he said. "But she cries a lot." He swivelled his gaze back to his hockey game.

"I'm on antidepressants," Charlene said. "After this happened with Michael, I couldn't deal."

At Walter Reed, an informal network of gruff Vietnam and Gulf War veterans minister to the blind and the bandaged with great tenderness. Jim Mayer, for example, fought with the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Today, at fifty-eight, he runs an executive-training program in the Department of Veterans Affairs, but to the soldiers lying in Ward 57 he's the Milkshake Man. He arrives three days a week after work with a box of McDonald's milkshakes, which he offers from bed to bed. I had been at the hospital three days before I realized that his legs are carbon, graphite, and plastic below the knee; he had stepped on a mine near the Cambodian border. One afternoon, he cried "Watch this!" and went skipping down the hall. The amputees couldn't take their eyes off him.

"We want to make sure no veteran is ever again treated the way we were when we came home," Mayer told me. The vets help organize trips to the Smithsonian and the White House and arrange free tickets for the young men to see the Wizards play basketball and the Capitals play hockey. Wounded soldiers who can make the trip are also invited every Friday night to Fran O'Brien's, a fancy steak house in downtown Washington, where they can load up on thirty-dollar steaks and all the beer they can drink, free of charge. Hal Koster, one of the restaurant's two owners, served three tours as a gunship crew chief in Vietnam. "It's an honor," he told me one Friday before Christmas as he watched more than two dozen young men consume a few thousand dollars' worth of beef, crab cakes, and tiramisu. "Nobody did this for us."

The amputees I met were all eager to talk about their wounds, and welcomed the chance to tell the story. War stories, like Holocaust stories, are all both alike and different, and all improbable; each turns on moments of horror, serendipity, and unimaginable bravery. Sitting next to me at Fran O'Brien's was Steve Reighard, of Bloomington, Indiana, who was hacking one-handed with a combination knife-fork at a steak the size of a dictionary. "They ambushed us," he said. "I'm standing there trying to realize what happened and my arm is laying there. I picked it up and fell in the dirt." Across the table, Robert Acosta, of Santa Ana, California, manipulated a steak knife with his stainless-steel hook. "They threw a hand grenade in my truck," he said. "I picked it up and, damn, dropped it down between my legs. When I grabbed it again, it blew up in my hand." At Walter Reed, Phil Bauer, a strapping cavalry scout from upstate New York, had described being on a Chinook helicopter that was shot down on November 2nd, killing fifteen soldiers on their way to a short leave. When he came to, he said, he was pinned atop the open-eyed corpse of a woman soldier to whom he'd just given a piece of gum. His leg was jammed beneath the burning roof of the Chinook, and he had to lie there, without morphine, for two hours while a "jaws of life" apparatus was flown in from Tikrit. "It was like cooking a steak with the cover down," he said. He lost his right leg below the knee. At the dinner, a soldier named Ed Platt, from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, told me that the signature moment of his calamity was when the medics used the ribbons of his leg—shattered by a rocket-propelled grenade—as its own tourniquet. "They just folded it up," he said. "I looked down and I'm looking at the sole of my boot." He shuddered. "O.K., cool, whatever, dude," he muttered to himself as he finished his story. Doctors amputated just below Platt's right hip.

Platt sat across from Michael Cain, who was playing keep-away with another soldier's cap. "He's a 'baloney,' " Platt said of Cain. The word was a play on "below knee" but perfectly evoked the unnatural pink cylinder that Cain's lower leg had become. Though the Purple Heart club is a band of brothers, there is a hierarchy of wounds. A whole leg trumps a half. A right hand trumps a left. And everybody was down on one soldier who was physically unmarked but said he had been mentally wounded by the war.

It was possible to forget how young some of the soldiers were as they told their stories of wounds and weapons, of campaigns and tactics, and of the time one of them, under orders to do nothing, watched a crowd of Iraqi men drop a woman who was said to be an adulteress from a high bridge ("We were, like, 'Fuck!' "). But then they started talking about their favorite movies. All of them liked "Elf," while their hands-down favorite was "Finding Nemo."

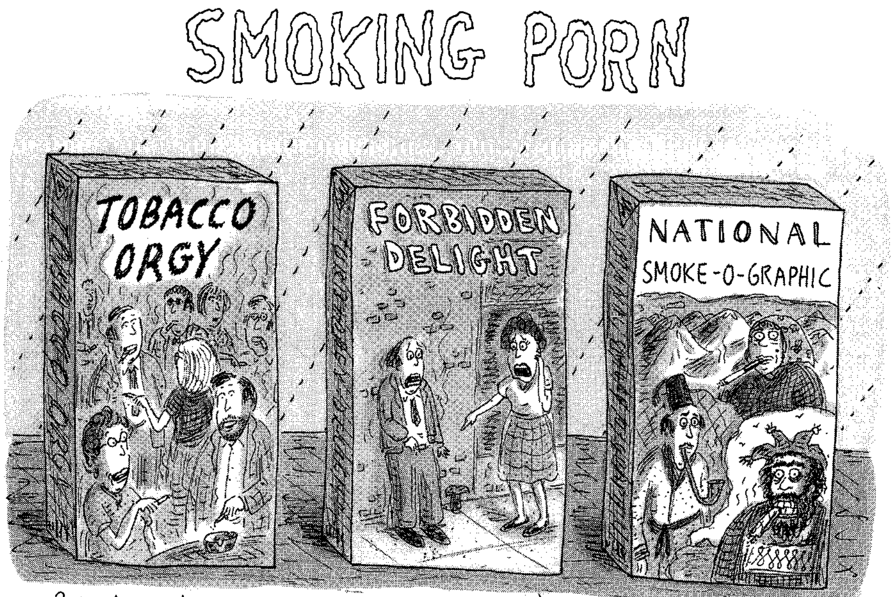
The conversation turned, as it often does among Iraq-war amputees, to the mysterious workings of the Med Board. Officially called the Physical Evaluation Board, it determines whether a wounded soldier may continue in his or her Army job, is fit for some other Army job, or should be medically retired. It also quantifies a soldier's disability, which determines what percentage of a soldier's base pay will be awarded in benefits. Soldiers talk about the Med Board the way people in the Old Testament talk about God—as an inscrutable, mercurial, sometimes vengeful force. None of them understand how the board works, and all fear they will get "Burger-Kinged out," meaning medically retired with a meagre benefit. A missing arm has to be worth thirty per cent, right? they asked each other. And a missing leg forty?

Whatever their retirement prospects, all the amputees said they had no regrets. Robert Acosta spoke of the need to fight terrorism and the choice a soldier makes to face death. "Shit happens," he said. Steve Reighard said, "I believed in what we were doing." If we hadn't gone to war, he said, "eventually we'd see chemical arms and those kind of munitions on our streets." The other soldiers nodded. At one point, Reighard leaned over and said quietly, "You know, we kind of have to think that." He gestured at his missing arm. "Otherwise, this is in vain."

Michael Cain was pale and his voice raspy as he hobbled toward the door on his cane and prosthesis, which, being new, was painful to wear. But he kept up the hard, edgy banter that amputees use among themselves. "Hey, Acosta, give me a hand!" he yelled to the one who'd fumbled the grenade. "Platt, shake a leg." I walked two blocks for my car and pulled into the restaurant's semicircular driveway. Cain got in front and, with the door still open, pulled off his prosthesis for relief. A line of well-dressed diners, standing on the curb waiting for valets to bring their cars, stared at him, aghast. When Cain noticed, he waved his prosthesis and yelled in a falsetto singsong, "Look! My leg comes off! Look!" The onlookers turned away. Cain was still laughing cruelly as we drove off.

Shortly after the holidays, I flew to Milwaukee and drove two hours northwest to Berlin. (The name is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable.) Downtown Berlin has a lot of quaint brick buildings, but, with the Wal-Mart on its outskirts and the chains in nearby Oshkosh, there are not many people on the streets.

Michael was home, though not yet out of the Army; he was waiting for the Med Board to rule on his case. Following a final medical evaluation,



Behind closed doors, it's a swingin', puffin', ashtray-strewn, lightin'-up, inhalin' world.

Milt's vice is totally secret- until a co-worker makes an "interesting" discovery!

Curious and unusual smoking practices from around the globe.

it generally takes two to four months to get a decision. I found him in his parents' living room, watching the pro-wrestling show "Monday Night Raw" at top volume on a television screen the size of a bedsheet. Michael reached up to shake my hand without taking his eyes from the screen. His prosthesis sat amid a pile of wrestling magazines and empty bottles of Mountain Dew Code Red, and he rubbed his elevated stump as though it ached. Leslie was still around; she sat across the room, flipping through a magazine. One of Michael's younger sisters, Stephanie, sat at a computer in the corner of the living room, searching online for nursing-aide jobs, and his father was in the kitchen, cooking himself a late supper of fried ham and eggs on toast spread with peanut butter. He is a fatalist, and, when asked how he felt about Michael's decision to enlist or what he thinks of the Army's policies on disability payments, he falls back constantly on the phrase "There's nothing you can do." Besides taking care of his llamas, he often feeds his neighbors' animals as well. He is the family cook, and always has dinner on the table when Charlene gets home from work.

Charlene, who arises around four-thirty in the morning to go to her job, is the family rock. She absorbs blow after blow without appearing to crack. Michael's injury is her project. She's in charge. On the phone to a friend, she uses phrases like "I brought him home on December 16th," "I want to catch that before it becomes a full-blown infection," and "I need to get him to Milwaukee because he has a torn medial meniscus and PCL." At the kitchen table, she is often immersed in the maze of forms required for every treatment, trying to insure that care will be adequate and costs will be covered—complexities that sometimes take her hours a day to manage.

Until last year, Charlene and Kenneth had raised their granddaughter Felicia, who is now six, because Michael's older sister, Yolanda, was unable to care for her. When Charlene was at Walter Reed with Michael, she got a call that Yolanda, who was seven months pregnant with her second child, was going into labor, and that the baby had hydroencephaly. The baby was born on September 29th, and has brain damage of indeterminate severity. "His brain is not developed totally," Charlene said. "We won't know for a while how damaged he is. So I'm dealing with all this stuff. Then I get a call to go back to Michael's room, because he needs me. Then my phone rings, and it's my youngest saying, 'Yolanda's back in the hospital with a kidney infection.' "

When I asked Charlene how she felt about the war, she said, "I don't like the fact that these young kids are joining up. I realize somebody has to do it. I still have my doubts about Saddam. I can't say I supported the war. Thinking about it now, maybe, I'm just kind of neutral about it. I'm angry Michael got hurt. I don't know who at. I'm just angry."

At Walter Reed, Michael's spirits had been buoyed by routine, Army discipline, and the loving ministrations of the Vietnam vets, as well as of his mother. In Berlin, he was no longer Sergeant Cain, or a war hero in the nation's entertainment- and star-filled capital, but a one-legged guy in a Barcalounger with little to fill his days beyond PlayStation 2 and thrice-weekly physical-therapy appointments. Gone was the gung-ho warrior counting on a twenty-year career. Michael was even thinner and paler than he'd been a month earlier, and he was so withdrawn he spoke only in monosyllables. Charlene said that he hadn't been sleeping well. Michael wasn't work-

"I'd like something smaller—something with fewer walls to defend."

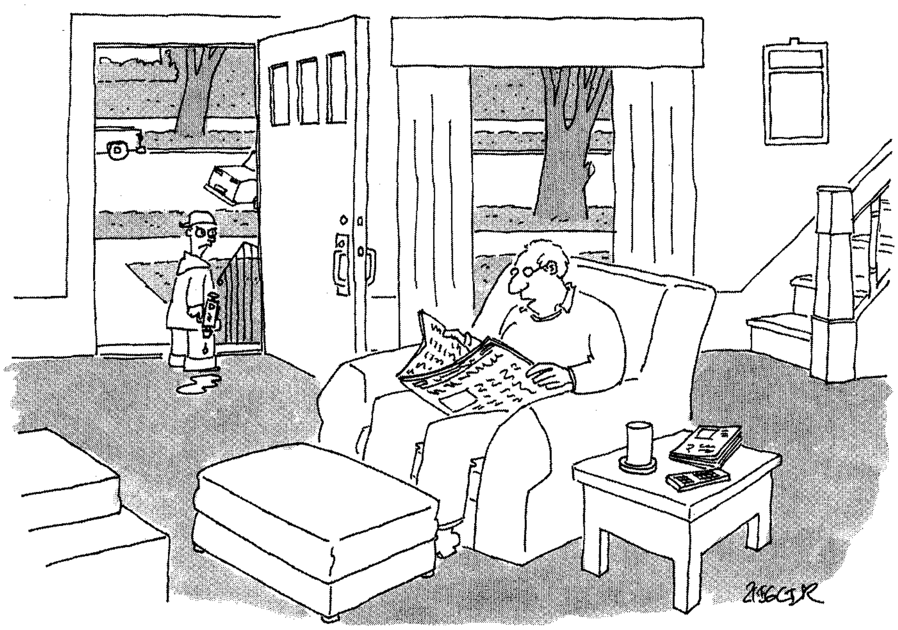
ing, though he told me he was thinking of taking an assistant manager's job at the local McDonald's. In the fall, he said, he was going to the University of Wisconsin at Madison "to study computers, computer programming, something like that." I asked if he'd applied and he said no. "But they've got to take me."

After the wrestling match, Leslie drove us to a dingy roadhouse called the Country Inn; the two of them hardly spoke, and seemed more like an old married couple than like sweethearts. Michael spent most of the evening at a video slot machine, his thin frame lost in a voluminous green-and-gold Packers coat, downing one Coors Light after another, dribbling away his money. Our destination the next day was the Fox River Mall, an hour away, in Appleton. Michael is still drawing nineteen hundred dollars a month in base pay; he spent a hundred and fifty on a pile of Green Bay Packers memorabilia—jersey, helmet, stickers, and flags for the car—to add to his already extensive collection. Leslie did the driving again, and again they hardly spoke. Every few minutes, he'd raise her fingertips to his lips and kiss them, and she'd smile.

On January 21st, Michael returned to Berlin High School to speak to an assembly. He limped to the podium wearing a Washington Capitals jersey, which the star right wing Jaromir Jagr had given him in the team's locker room during Michael's celebrity-wounded phase. After admitting he'd come unprepared, Michael bashfully delivered some uplifting bumper-sticker slogans about keeping a positive outlook on life (a phrase he used three times). He made no appeal to patriotism, though he told the students he had no regrets.

During questions, someone asked if they could see Michael's "new leg." He rolled up his pant leg to show the prosthesis; the auditorium fell silent. Then he pulled it off, and a few kids squealed "Eeew!" The room exploded in applause. When he was asked about compensation, Michael seemed to get carried away by the attention he was receiving, saying that he would get "thousands of dollars" and "a hundred-per-cent disability," that the Army had promised him a hundred thousand dollars for college. "And if I have children their college will be paid for," he said. "Their birthing process will be paid for. . . . I pretty much have everything paid for."

The truth is that Michael will need several more surgeries; the ankle of the left leg is fractured and may need to be reset; he suffers from hammertoe, a downward contraction of the toes; and many nerves are damaged. The Army and the Veterans Administration will pay for the surgical procedures, but disability compensation is still a mystery to him and to most other soldiers. It is based on a complex formula that includes an estimate of lost-earnings potential. Now that most jobs don't involve much physical movement, the amputees are afraid they'll receive little.



"Go ahead—rob a bank. But don't say I didn't warn you."

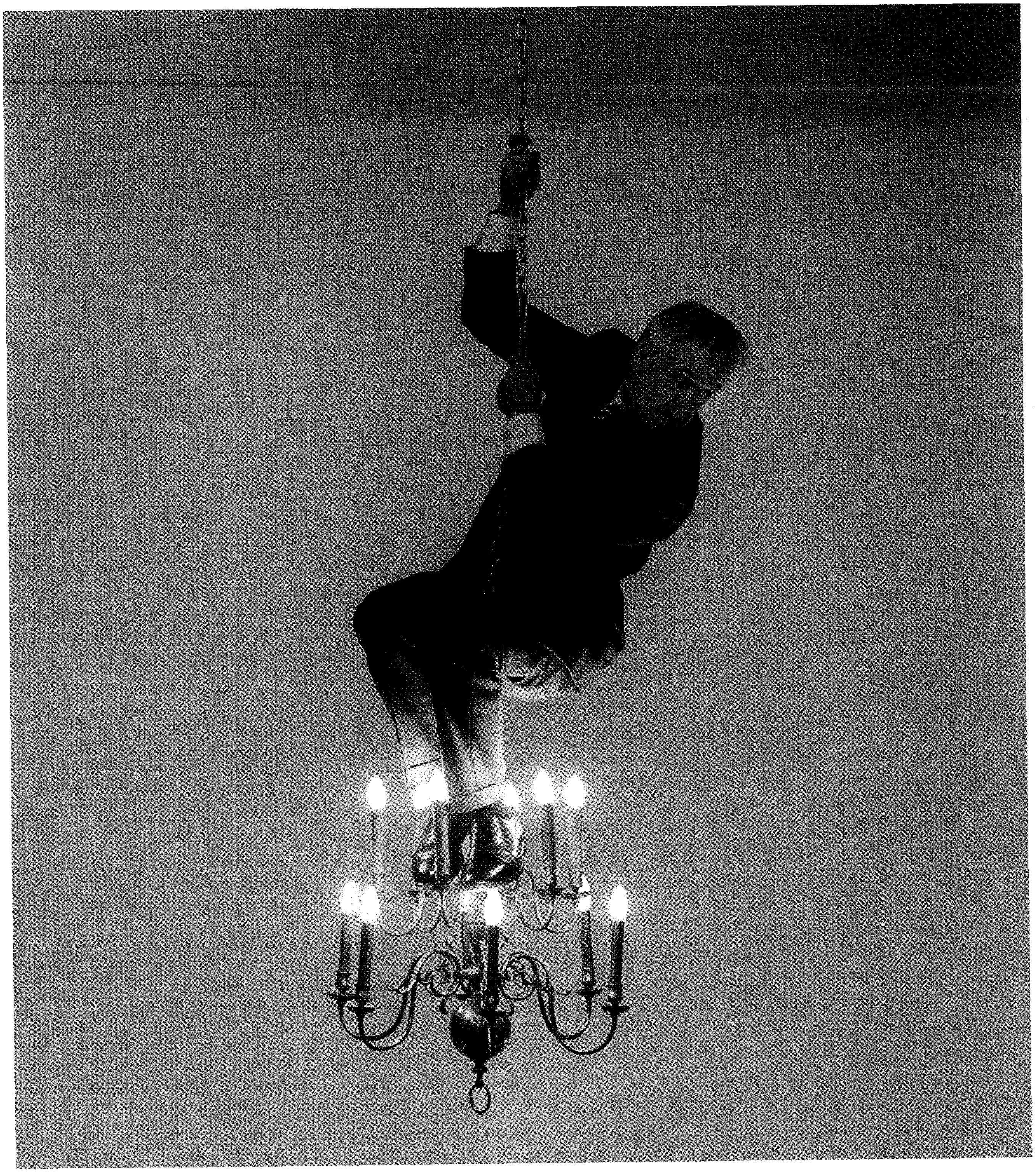
At the end of February, Michael was back at Walter Reed because his prosthesis was still painful. He has "heterotopic ossification," or calcium deposits that caused the bone to protrude. He was being fitted for a new liner and socket. I found him and Leslie, now his fiancée, in their room at Mologne House, and though I expected him to be depressed by being in the hospital, his spirits seemed enormously lifted. He looked more filled out, with better color in his face, and he was back to making endless jokes. We took a taxi to a nearby Mexican restaurant. Michael went outside for a cigarette, and stood at the window pantomiming being a homeless old drunk. Leslie put her face in her hands. Then he came inside, draped a paper napkin over his arm, and, in a Pepé Le Pew accent, pretended to be a fancy waiter until Leslie pulled him into his seat.

Because he seemed so much happier being back in the military milieu, I asked him why he didn't consider trying to stay in the Army and get a job suitable for a one-legged soldier. A career working with computers, after all, doesn't require two whole legs. He waved away the suggestion, saying only, "Nah. I don't want it." A little later, he said that sitting at a computer all day "isn't really being a soldier." I asked if he had applied to Madison yet. "No, we're putting that on hold because we have the baby coming," he said. Leslie grew very still, staring at her plate. Michael put his arm around her proudly, and she glanced up quickly through her falling brown hair. The baby is due in August. ♦

FICTION

LONG AGO YESTERDAY

BY HANIF KUREISHI



One evening just after my fiftieth birthday, I pushed against the door of a pub not far from my childhood home. My father, on the way back from his office in London, was inside, standing at the bar. He didn't recognize me, but I was delighted, almost ecstatic, to see the old man again, particularly as he'd been dead for ten years, and my mother for five.

"Good evening," I said, standing next to him. "Nice to see you."

"Good evening," he replied.

"This place never changes," I said.

"We like it this way," he said.

I ordered a drink; I needed one.

I noticed the date on a discarded newspaper and calculated that Dad was just a little older than me, nearly fifty-one. We were as close to equals—or contemporaries—as we'd ever be.

He was talking to a man sitting on a stool next to him, and the barmaid was laughing extravagantly with them both. I knew Dad better than anyone, or thought I did, and I was tempted to embrace him or at least kiss his hands, as I used to. I refrained, but watched him looking comfortable at the bar beside the man I now realized was the father of a school friend of mine. Neither of them seemed to mind when I joined in.

Like a lot of people, I have some of my best friendships with the dead. I dream frequently about both of my parents and the house where I grew up, undistinguished though it was. Of course, I never imagined that Dad and I might meet up like this, for a conversation.

Lately I had been feeling unusually foreign to myself. My fiftieth hit me like a tragedy, with a sense of wasted purpose and many wrong moves made. I could hardly complain: I was a theatre and film producer, with houses in London, New York, and Brazil. But complain I did. I had become keenly aware of various mental problems that enervated but did not ruin me.

I ran into Dad on a Monday. Over the weekend I'd been staying with some friends in the country who had a fine house and pretty acquaintances, good paintings to look at, and an excellent cook. The Iraq war, which had just started, had been on TV continuously. About twenty of us, old and young men, lay on deep sofas drinking champagne and giggling until the prospect of thousands of bombs smashing into donkey carts, human flesh, and primitive shacks had depressed everyone in the house. We were aware that disgust was general in the country and that Tony Blair, once our hope after years in opposition, had become the most tarnished and loathed leader since Anthony Eden. We were living in a time of lies, deceit, and alienation. This was heavy, and our lives seemed uncomfortably trivial in comparison.

Just after lunch, I had left my friend's house, and the taxi got me as far as the railway station when I realized I'd left behind a bent paper clip I'd been fiddling with. It was in my friend's library, where I'd been reading about mesmerism in the work of Maupassant, as well as Dickens's experiments with hypnotism, which had got him into a lot of trouble with the wife of a friend. The taxi took me back, and I hurried into the room to retrieve the paper clip, but the cleaner had just finished. Did I want to examine the contents of the vacuum? my hosts asked. They were making faces at one another. Yet I had begun to see myself as heroic in terms of what I'd achieved in spite of my obsessions. This was a line my therapist used. Luckily, I would be seeing the good doctor the next day.

Despite my devastation over the paper clip, I returned to the station and got on the train. I had come down by car, so it was only now I realized that the route of the train meant we would stop at the suburban railway station nearest to my childhood home. As we drew into the platform, I found myself straining to see things I recognized, even familiar faces, though I had left the area some thirty years before. But it was raining hard and almost impossible to make anything out. Then, just as the train was about to pull away, I grabbed my bag and got off, walking out into the street with no idea what I would do.

Near the station there had been a small record shop, a bookshop, and a place to buy jeans, along with several pubs that I'd been taken to as a young man by a local bed-sit aesthete, the first person I came out to. Of course, he knew straight away. His hero was Jean Cocteau. We'd discuss French literature and Wilde and Pop, before taking our speed pills and applying our makeup in the station toilet and getting the train into the city. Along with another white friend who dressed as Jimi Hendrix, we saw all the plays and shows. Eventually I got a job in a West End box office. This led to work as a stagehand, usher, dresser—even a director—before I found my "vocation" as a producer.

Now I asked my father his name and what he did. I knew how to work Dad, of course. Soon he was more interested in me than in the other man. Yet my fear didn't diminish: didn't we look similar? I wasn't sure. My clothes, as well as my sparkly new teeth, were more expensive than his, and I was heavier and taller, about a third bigger all over—I have always worked out. But my hair was going gray; I don't dye it. Dad's hair was still mostly black.

An accountant all his life, my father had worked in the same office for fifteen years. He was telling me that he had two sons: Dennis, who was in the Air Force, and me—Billy. A few months ago I'd gone away to university, where, apparently, I was doing well. My all-female production of "Waiting for Godot"—"a bloody depressing play," according to Dad—had been admired. I wanted to say, "But I didn't direct it, Dad, I only produced it."

I had introduced myself to Dad as Peter, the name I sometimes adopted, along with quite a developed alternative character, during anonymous sexual encounters. Not that I needed a persona: Father would ask me where I was from and what I did, but whenever I began to answer he'd interrupt with a stream of advice and opinions.

My father said he wanted to sit down because his sciatica was playing up, and I joined him at a table. Eying the barmaid, Dad said, "She's lovely, isn't she?"

"Lovely hair," I said. "Unfortunately, none of her clothes fit."

"Who's interested in her clothes?"

This was an aspect of my father I'd never seen; perhaps it was a departure for him. I'd never known him to go to the pub after work; he came straight home. And once Dennis had left I was able to secure Father's evenings for myself. Every day I'd wait for him at the bus stop, ready to take his briefcase. In the house I'd make him a cup of tea while he changed.

Now the barmaid came over to remove our glasses and empty the ashtrays. As she leaned across the table, Dad put his hand behind her knee and slid it

TEUN HOCKS, "UNTITLED (MAN ON CHANDELIER)" (2003)/PPOW GALLERY

all the way up her skirt to her arse, which he caressed, squeezed, and held until she reeled away and stared at him in disbelief, shouting that she hated the pub and the men in it, and would he get out before she called the landlord and he flung him out personally?

The landlord did indeed rush over. He snatched away Dad's glass, raising his fist as Dad hurried to the door, forgetting his briefcase. I'd never known Dad to go to work without his briefcase, and I'd never known him to leave it anywhere. As my brother and I used to say, his attaché case was always attached to him. Outside, where Dad was brushing himself down, I handed it back to him.

"Thank you," he said. "Shouldn't have done that. But once, just once, I had to. Suppose it's the last time I touch anyone!" He asked, "Which way are you going?"

"I'll walk with you a bit," I said. "My bag isn't heavy. I'm passing through. I need to get a train into London, but there's no hurry."

He said, "Why don't you come and have a drink at my house?"

My parents lived according to a strict regime, mathematical in its exactitude. Why, now, was he inviting a stranger to his house? I had always been his only friend; our involvement had kept us both busy.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes," he said. "Come."

Noise and night and rain streaming everywhere: you couldn't see farther than your hand. But we both knew the way, Dad moving slowly, his mouth hanging open to catch more air. He seemed happy enough, perhaps with what he'd done in the pub, or maybe my company cheered him up.

Yet when we turned the corner into the neat familiar road, a road that had, to my surprise, remained exactly where it was all the time I hadn't been there, I felt wrapped in coldness. In my recent dreams—fading as they were like frescoes in the light—the suburban street had been darkly dismal under the yellow shadows of the streetlights, and filled with white flowers and a suffocating, deathly odor, like being buried in roses. But how could I falter now? Once inside the house, Dad threw open the door to the living room. I blinked; there she was, Mother, knitting in her huge chair with her feet up, an open box of chocolates on the small table beside her, her fingers rustling for treasure in the crinkly paper.

Dad left me while he changed into his pajamas and dressing gown. The fact that he had a visitor, a stranger, didn't deter him from his routine, outside of which there were no maps.

I stood in my usual position, just behind Mother's chair. Here, where I wouldn't impede her enjoyment with noise, complaints, or the sight of my face, I explained that Dad and I had met in the pub and he'd invited me back for a drink.

Mother said, "I don't think we've got any drink, unless there's something left over from last Christmas. Drink doesn't go bad, does it?"

"It doesn't go bad."

"Now shut up," she said. "I'm watching this. D'you watch the soaps?"

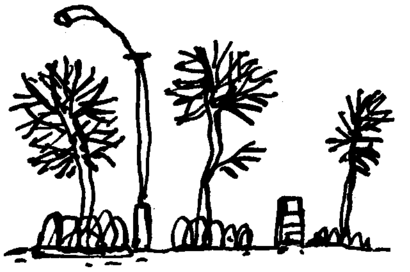
"Not much."

Maybe the ominous whiteness of my dreams had been stimulated by the whiteness of the things Mother had been knitting and crocheting—headrests, gloves, cushion covers; there wasn't a piece of furniture in the house without a knitted thing on it. Even as a grown man, I couldn't buy a pair of gloves without thinking I should be wearing Mother's.

In the kitchen, I made a cup of tea for myself and Dad. Mum had left my father's dinner in the oven: sausages, mash, and peas, all dry as lime by now, and presented on a large cracked plate, with space between each item. Mum had asked me if I wanted anything, but how would I have been able to eat anything here?

As I waited for the kettle to boil, I washed up the dishes at the sink overlooking the garden. Then I carried Father's tea and dinner into his study, formerly the family dining room. With one hand I made a gap for the plate at the table, which was piled high with library books.

After I'd finished my homework, Dad always liked me to go through the radio schedules, marking programs I might record for him. If I was lucky, he would read to me, or talk about the lives of the artists he was absorbed with—these were his companions. Their lives were exemplary, but only a fool would try to emulate them. Meanwhile I would slip my hand inside his pajama top and tickle his back, or I'd scratch his head or rub his arms until his eyes rolled in appreciation.



Now in his bedwear, sitting down to eat, Dad told me he was embarked on a "five-year reading plan." He was working on "War and Peace." Next it would be "Remembrance of Things Past," then "Middlemarch," all of Dickens, Homer, Chaucer, and so on. He kept a separate notebook for each author he read.

"This methodical way," he pointed out, "you get to know everything in literature. You will never run out of interest, of course, because then there is music, painting, in fact the whole of human history. . . ."

His talk reminded me of the time I won the school essay prize for a tract on time-wasting. The piece was not about how to fritter away one's time profitlessly, which might have made it a useful and lively work, but about how much can be achieved by filling every moment with activity! Dad was my ideal. He would read even in the bath, and as he reclined there my job was to wash his feet, back, and hair with soap and a flannel. When he was done, I'd be waiting with a warm, open towel.

I interrupted him, "You certainly wanted to know that woman this evening."

"What? How quiet it is! Shall we hear some music?"

He was right. Neither the city nor the country was quiet like the suburbs, the silence of people holding their breath.

Dad was holding up a record he had borrowed from the library. "You will know this, but not well enough, I guarantee you."

Beethoven's Fifth was an odd choice of background music, but how could I sneer? Without his enthusiasm, my life would never have been filled with music. Mother had been a church pianist, and she'd taken us to the ballet, usually "The Nutcracker," or the Bolshoi when they visited London. Mum and Dad sometimes went ballroom dancing; I loved it when they dressed up. Out of such minute inspirations I have found meaning sufficient for a life.

Dad said, "Do you think I'll be able to go in that pub again?"

"If you apologize."

"Better leave it a few weeks. I don't know what overcame me. That woman's not a Jewess, is she?"

"I don't know."

"Usually she's happy to hear about my aches and pains, and who else is, at our age?"

"Where d'you ache?"

"It's the walk to and from the station—sometimes I just can't make it. I have to stop and lean against something."

I said, "I've been learning massage."

"Ah." He put his feet in my lap. I squeezed his feet, ankles, and calves; he wasn't looking at me now. He said, "Your hands are strong. You're not a plumber, are you?"

"I've told you what I do. I have the theatre, and now I'm helping to set up a teaching foundation, a studio for the young."

He whispered, "Are you homosexual?"

"I am, yes. Never seen a cock I didn't like. You?"

"Queer? It would have shown up by now, wouldn't it? But I've never done much about my female interests."

"You've never been unfaithful?"

"I've always liked women."

I asked, "Do they like you?"

"The local secretaries are friendly. Not that you can do anything. I can't afford a 'professional.'"

"How often do you go to the pub?"

"I've started popping in after work. My Billy has gone."

"For good?"

"After university he'll come running back to me, I can assure you of that. Around this time of night, I'd always be talking to him. There's a lot you can put in a kid, without his knowing it. My wife doesn't have a word to say to me. She doesn't like to do anything for me, either."

"Sexually?"

"She might look large to you, but in the flesh she is even larger, and she crushes me like a gnat in bed. I can honestly say we haven't had it off for eighteen years."

"Since Billy was born?"

He said, letting me caress him, "She never had much enthusiasm for it. Now she is indifferent . . . frozen . . . almost dead."

I said, "People are more scared of their own passion than of anything else. But it's a grim deprivation she's made you endure."

He nodded. "You dirty homos have a good time, I bet, looking at one another in toilets and that—"

"People like to think so. But I've lived alone for five years."

He said, "I am hoping she will die before me, then I might have a chance. . . . We ordinary types carry on in these hateful situations for the single reason of the children, and you'll never have that."

"You're right."

He indicated photographs of me and my brother. "Without those babies, there is nothing for me. It is ridiculous to try to live for yourself alone."

"Don't I know it? Unless one can find others to live for."

"I hope you do!" he said. "But it can never be the same as your own."

If the mortification of fidelity imperils love, there's always the consolation of children. I had been Dad's girl, his servant, his worshipper; my faith had kept him alive. It was a cult of personality he had set up, with my brother and me as his mirrors.

Now Mother opened the door—not so wide that she could see us, or us her—and announced that she was going to bed.

"Good night," I called.

Dad was right about kids. But what could I do about it? I had bought an old factory at my own expense and had converted it into a theatre studio, a place where young people could work with established artists. I spent so much time in this building that I had moved my office there. It was where I would head when I left here, to sit in the café, seeing who would turn up and what they wanted from me, if anything. I was gradually divesting myself, as I aged, of all I'd accumulated. One of Father's favorite works was Tolstoy's "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"

I said, "With or without children, you are still a man. There are things you want that children cannot provide."

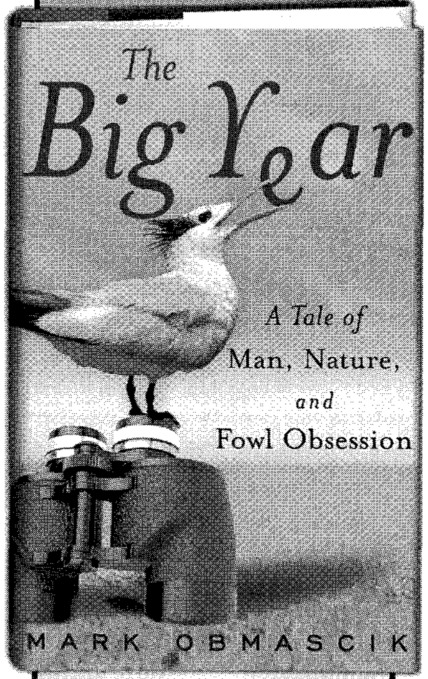
He said, "We all, in this street, are devoted to hobbies."

"The women, too?"

"They sew, or whatever. There's never an idle moment. My son has written a beautiful essay on the use of time."

He sipped his tea; the Beethoven, which was on repeat, boomed away. He seemed content to let me work on his legs.

"A feathered version of *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World.* Perfect!"
—Outside



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"Got him last week—he rounds up the strays at the water cooler."

Since he didn't want me to stop, I asked him to lie on the floor. With characteristic eagerness, he removed his dressing gown and then his pajama top; I massaged every part of him, murmuring "Dad, Dad" under my breath. When at last he stood up, I was ready with his warm dressing gown, which I had placed on the radiator.

It was late, but not too late to leave. It was never too late to leave the suburbs, but Dad invited me to stay. I agreed, though it hadn't occurred to me that he would suggest I sleep in my old room, in my bed.

He accompanied me upstairs and in I went, stepping over record sleeves, magazines, clothes, books. My piano I was most glad to see. I can still play a little, but my passion was writing the songs that were scrawled in notebooks on top of the piano. Not that I would be able to look at them. When I began to work in the theatre, I didn't show my songs to anyone, and eventually I came to believe they were a waste of time.

Standing there shivering, I had to tell myself the truth: my secret wasn't that I hadn't propagated but that I'd wanted to be an artist, not just a producer. If I chose, I could blame my parents for this: they had seen themselves as spectators, in the background of life. But I was the one who'd lacked the guts—to fail, to succeed, to engage with the whole undignified, insane attempt at originality. I had only ever been a handmaiden, first to Dad and then to others—the artists I'd supported—and how could I have imagined that that would be sufficient?

My bed was narrow. Through the thin ceiling, I could hear my father snoring; I knew whenever he turned over in bed. It was true that I had never heard them making love. Somehow, between them, they had transformed the notion of physical love into a ridiculous idea. Why would people want to do something so awkward with their limbs?

I couldn't hear Mother. She didn't snore, but she could sigh for England. I got up and went to the top of the stairs. By the kitchen light I could see her in her dressing gown, stockings around her ankles, trudging along the hall and into each room, wringing her hands as she went, muttering back to the ghosts clamoring within her skull.

She stood still to scratch and tear at her exploded arms. During the day, she kept them covered because of her "eczema." Now I watched while flakes of skin fell onto the carpet, as though she were converting herself into dust. She dispersed the shreds of her body with her delicately pointed dancer's foot.

As a child—even as a young man—I would never have approached Mother in this state. She had always made it clear that the uproar and demands of two boys were too much for her. Naturally, she couldn't wish for us to die, so she died herself, inside.

One time, my therapist asked whether Dad and I were able to be silent together. More relevant, I should have said, was whether Mother and I could be together without my chattering on about whatever occurred to me, in order to distract her from herself. Now I made up my mind and walked down the stairs, watching her all the while. She was like difficult music, and you wouldn't want to get too close. But, as with such music, I wouldn't advise trying to make it out—you have to sit with it, wait for it to address you.

I was standing beside her, and with her head down she looked at me sideways.

"I'll make you some tea," I said, and she even nodded.

Before, during one of her nighttime wanderings, she had found me masturbating in front of some late-night TV program. It must have been some boy group, or Bowie. "I know what you are," she said. She was not disapproving. She was just a lost ally.

I made a cup of lemon tea and gave it to her. As she stood sipping it, I took up a position beside her, my head bent also, attempting to see—as she appeared to vibrate with inner electricity—what she saw and felt. It was clear that there was no chance of my ever being able to cure her. I could only become less afraid of her madness.

In his bed, Father was still snoring. He wouldn't have liked me to be with her. He had taken her sons for himself, charmed them away, and he wasn't a sharer.

She was almost through with the tea and getting impatient. Wandering, muttering, scratching: she had important work to do and time was passing. I couldn't detain her anymore.

I slept in her chair in the front room.

When I got up, my parents were having breakfast. My father was back in his suit, and my mother was in the uniform she wore to work in the supermarket. I dressed rapidly in order to join Dad as he walked to the station. It had stopped raining.

I asked him about his day, but couldn't stop thinking about mine. I was living, as my therapist enjoyed reminding me, under the aegis of the clock. I wanted to go to the studio and talk; I wanted to eat well and make love well, go to a show and then dance, and make love again. I could not be the same as them.

At the station in London, Father and I parted. I said I'd always look out for him when I was in the area, but couldn't be sure when I'd be coming his way again. ♦

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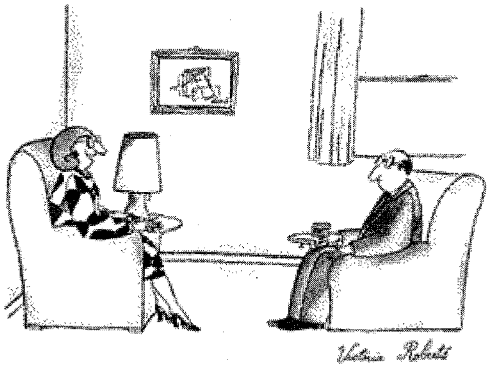

"Don't worry, Howard. The big questions are multiple choice."

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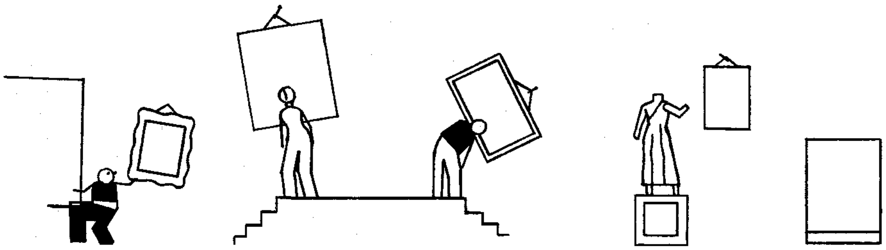


POP MUSIC

LET'S GO SWIMMING

Arthur Russell's gentle revolutions.

BY SASHA FRERE-JONES

This story begins, as many good ones do, with a gay man from Oskaloosa playing cello in a closet in a Buddhist seminary. It ends with a gentle and brilliant musician dying in New York long before his time. In between, the cellist, Arthur Russell, wrote orchestral music, produced disco hits, and recorded a body of solo cello-and-voice songs that fit somewhere between lullabies and art songs. The structural sprawl and harmonic flux common to what has come to be called "intelligent dance music" (a phrase Russell would have hated) and the songs of rock bands like Wilco and Radiohead characterized his music from the start.

An English label called Soul Jazz has just released "The World of Arthur Russell," a collection of Russell's dance-music productions; and a New York label, Audika Records, has issued "Calling Out of Context," a collection of unreleased songs. Russell's work is stranded between lands real and imagined: the street and the cornfield; the soft bohemian New York and the hard Studio 54 New York; the cheery bold strokes of pop and the liberating possibilities of abstract art. Arthur Russell didn't dissolve these borders so much as wander past them, humming his own song.

Before his death, from AIDS, in 1992, at the age of forty, Russell collaborated and studied with so many lights of the avant-garde world that his résumé reads like an eagerly overdrawn backstory note for a movie character—"Right, right, I move to New York and I meet all the big artists! Robert Wilson, Philip Glass, Vin Diesel! Downtown is crazy!" As a teen, Russell, already a trained cello player and pianist, left Iowa and joined a Buddhist commune in San Francisco. Somewhere between living in the commune (where he had to hide his earthly cello playing) and two music conservatories, Russell met and worked with the poet Allen Ginsberg.

Russell arrived in downtown New York in 1973, at the age of twenty-two. He moved into an apartment building on East Twelfth Street. Ginsberg donated electricity through an extension cord. The punk musician Richard Hell lived in the same building, and the composer Rhys Chatham shared a room with Russell for a time.

"Arthur kept up with pop music, but he didn't care about fashion," his longtime partner, Tom Lee, recalls. "He wore T-shirts and jeans. He cut his hair on full moons, which is when he liked to go into the studio. He was self-conscious about his acne scars."

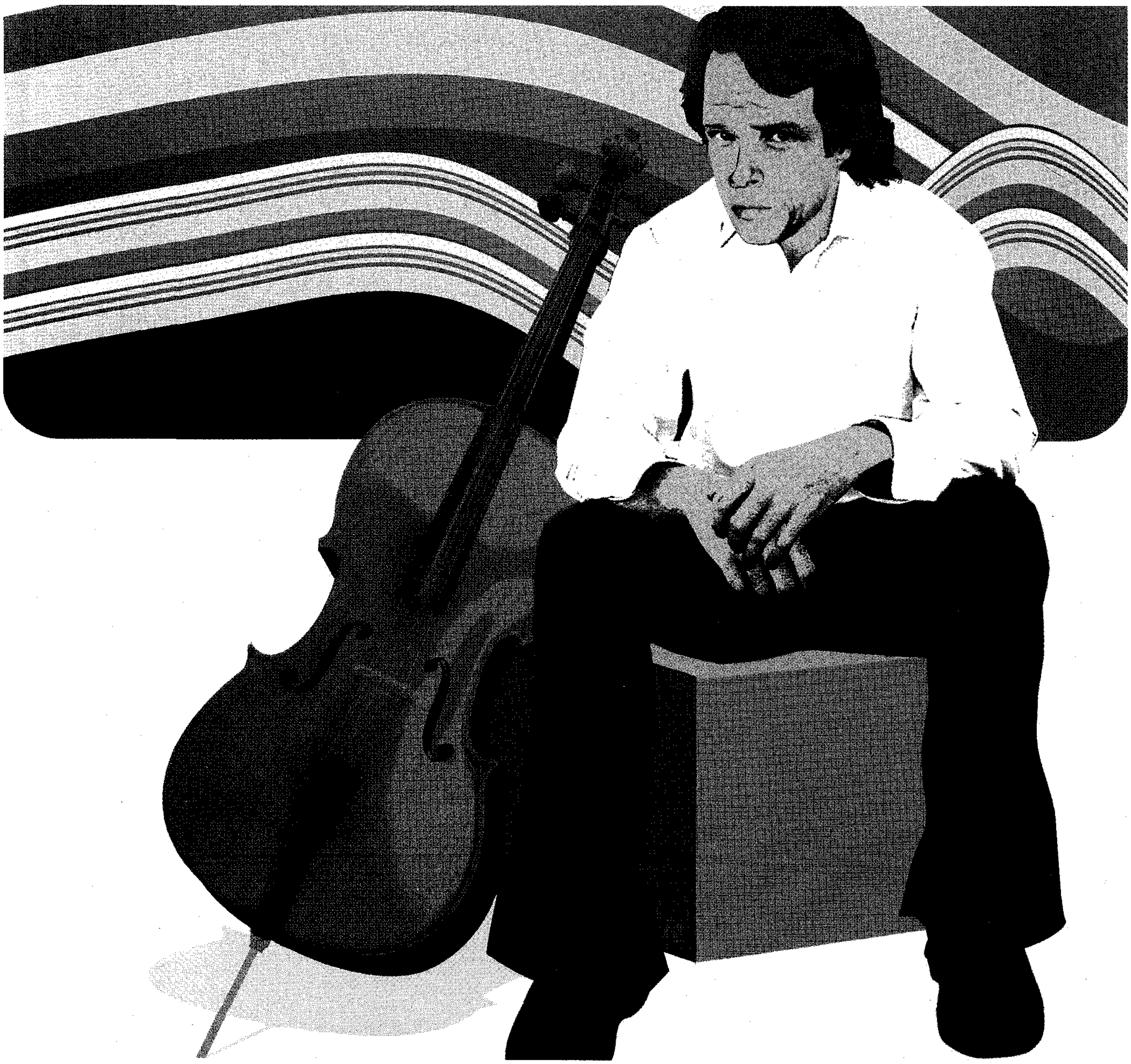
"After he went to New York and when he came home, he was always completely immersed in his music," his mother, Emily Russell, says. "He kept pieces of paper and score sheets in his shirt pockets—he always liked shirts with two pockets—and no matter where he was he would stop what he was doing and jot down notes or words."

Russell found the downtown disco the Gallery and met the d.j. Nicky Siano. The music instantly made sense to Russell. Disco's repetition and layering were, after all, not so different from Buddhist chants or Philip Glass's looped ostinatos. Russell entered New York's Sun Dragon studio in November of 1977 with Siano and a group of professional musicians, including David Byrne, on guitar. A year later, the song "Kiss Me Again" was released, under the band name Dinosaur, on Sire Records, the company's first dance twelve-inch single. It is the most conservative of Russell's dance recordings but possibly his best. After asking, "Am I woman? Or a slave?," the singer Myriam Valle spends much of the song repeating, "Oh baby, oh baby, here we are again," as the music decides not to be wherever here is. In the course of more than twelve minutes, phrases emerge and wrap around each other: Peter Zummo's gorgeous trombone motif, Russell's pizzicato cello theme, and a growing drone of loud, dissonant guitars which falls out of time with drums as it ends the song. When the smoke clears, genre is just a memory.

"The World of Arthur Russell" does not include "Kiss Me Again," but it does include the song that established Russell in the dance scene. "Is It All Over My Face" was produced with a club d.j. named Steve D'Acquisto and released in 1980. The imposing Ingram Brothers, veteran players of dance-music sessions, were hired as the rhythm section, but the singers were three unknown dancers D'Acquisto and Russell had met at David Mancuso's private club the Loft, then on Prince Street. One of the singers, Melvina Woods, repeats, "Is it all over my face? You've caught me love dancing," which is fairly unimposing, as chants go. The music vamps around two root notes, rolling along and picking up hitchhikers: a small piano phrase, a bit of vocalese, a conga part. It's a step down from the catharsis of "Kiss Me Again," but the sweet and playful mood is of a piece with Russell's body of work. Russell's idea of Nirvana had little to do with gravitas or asceticism. Charm and restraint gild his careful repetitions and variations.

Russell's recording sessions were a departure from the average hit-making process: they were closer in principle to jazz than to pop or dance. Musicians received brief instructions, rehearsed equally briefly, and then played for as long as felt right. Tapes from these sessions were then edited and recombined to make multiple records, a practice common to Jamaican pop forms like dub reggae. Russell often mixed songs more than ten times, highlighting different instruments each time, seeing infinity in an inch of tape. Patient business partners and label owners paid for these sessions, hoping for pop products to sell, not avant-garde experiments. It is to Russell's credit that they are somehow both.

Soon after collaborating with Robert Wilson on a performance of "Medea," in 1981, Russell started his own dance-music label, Sleeping Bag, with the downtown entrepreneur Will Socolov. One of Russell's first singles on the label was "Go Bang," a joyous tune full of yelping and cascading piano sounds. His dance singles were sounding more and more like birthday parties, possibly for people turning six.



The downtown cellist and composer Arthur Russell saw that dance music was the avant-garde's silent partner.

JOHN RITTER

Keith Haring and his electric children spring to mind. Russell and Haring were both gay men who came to New York and got swept up in various artistic communities. Liberated and empowered by disco, they both produced unapologetically bright, positive art that didn't shun popularity. AIDS destroyed the foundations of downtown culture and ended their careers abruptly. The gray scrim of irony that settled over the nineties shortly afterward would not have been a nurturing environment for their art, either. Russell and Haring both saw that dance music was the avant-garde's silent partner. History and hip-hop have proved them right.

While Russell was releasing dance singles, he was also recording songs written for solo cello and voice. The songs follow a fairly consistent pattern. Russell establishes the rhythm with a short phrase on his cello, playing pizzicato softly. In a checked voice that is almost humming, he sings a simple lyric. ("I'm sad and I can't talk about it / All alone and right next to you.") Sometimes there is an audible beat, though often not. Even when the songs were recorded in professional studios, the results sound like home recordings, intimate and foggy with breath. It is easy to imagine Russell returning from a club, alive with ideas, and trying to record a song without waking up Tom Lee. A fairly dark set of these songs was released in 1986 under the title "World of Echo." (Audika will reissue an expanded

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version of this album in early summer.) A set of slightly more optimistic songs was compiled posthumously, in 1994, as "Another Thought," for Philip Glass's Point Music label.

Russell's solo songs have a less conventional instrumentation than his disco records but, true to his contrarian tendencies, they are generally catchier and shorter, sometimes flirting with traditional verse-chorus movement. Two of the best of these songs, "Let's Go Swimming" and "Schoolbell / Treehouse," are on "The World of Arthur Russell." On "World of Echo," "Let's Go Swimming" is a whispered confession, more like a poem with accompaniment than like any kind of pop music. In the dance version included on "The World of Arthur Russell," Russell is the sly older brother, persuading us to jump into the ocean of drum machines with him: "I am banging on your door / hop in the blue blue sky."

"Calling Out of Context" is taken from two unreleased albums recorded in the mid- to late eighties. This time, Russell's voice and cello are shored up with drum machines and contributions from Zummo and the percussionist Mustafa Ahmed. His song titles have been trying to tell us a story—"Schoolbell / Treehouse," "Let's Go Swimming." The songs on "Calling Out of Context" simply make the story more explicit. Russell's inner child has the run of the joint now. What the critic Robert Palmer identified in 1977 as Russell's "infinitely repeatable polyphonic kernels" have finally popped and are rattling around in the stereo field.

The songs are slight, and often sound as if they were written and recorded in the time it takes to play them. Some of the songs make an impression that lasts as long as cotton candy, which likely wouldn't have bothered Russell. Others, like "Get Around to It," could easily have been hits with a less idiosyncratic singer. Even when he shades into fey, Russell never sounds weak or self-pitying. "Calling All Kids" contains the relevant bit of philosophy. The music pumps and clatters like some gray-market imitation of hip-hop, frazzled and happy. The final sound is a supermarket ray-gun toy buzzing away as Russell says, "Grown-ups are crazy." The sleek disco highs and sere art-world credibility are gone. Arthur just wants to play. ♦

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THE ART WORLD

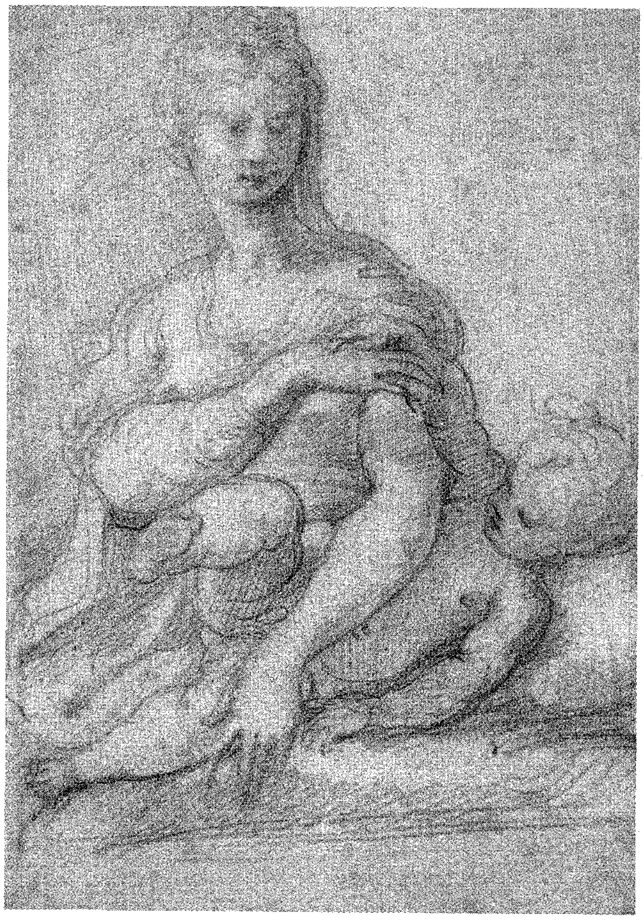
OUT OF TIME

Parmigianino and the trouble with being too good.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

Parmigianino was born Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola in Parma, in 1503, and died in exile nearby, at the age of thirty-seven, after having helped to initiate Mannerism, the tendency toward high-strung, strained expressiveness which became a dominant style in European painting for the rest of the sixteenth century. He is an Old Master for any time—like the present—when artists must contend with the crushing authority of a no longer satisfying but obdurate recent past. Today's hegemony is that of postminimalism—the longest-running aesthetic dispensation since the Victorian age. In Parmigianino's day, it was the high Renaissance of Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo.

A current sparkling show, at the Frick Collection, of some fifty drawings by Parmigianino, along with a few paintings and prints, is small, but there is nothing minor about it. The show is entitled "A Beautiful and Gracious Manner." Parmigianino's contemporaries were dazzled by the seductive cachet of his drawing, which, for me, is both more and less than beautiful and gracious, because it lays such distracting emphasis on the artist as a performer. A more apt term might be "charming" or, better, in our present lingo, "cool," indicating a state of being blessed, to the verge of being cursed, with preternatural facility. Parmigianino conveys gustily passionate, sexy content—dancerly madonnas, gossamer nudes—nonchalantly, as if it were nothing much. He gives an impression of being both primitively naïve and hypercivilized, and he elevates ease to the status of an ethical law: Thou shalt not toil. (Never mind that no other effect demands more dedicated practice, which consumed Parmigianino almost from the cradle. The orphan son of a painter, he was raised by painter uncles.) A peculiar pathos enters in. Parmigianino's talent overflows the requirements of his devotional and mythic subject matter, which becomes incidental to our experience of his pictures. Charm denotes such surplus goodness—more of what we like than we know what to do with. Cool is charm with overtones of awe and undertones of envy. Parmigianino suggests a banished prince, torn from his proper peers and condemned to address the likes of you and me.



A chalk study for "The Madonna of the Rose" (1529-30).

DEVONSHIRE COLLECTIONS, CHATSWORTH

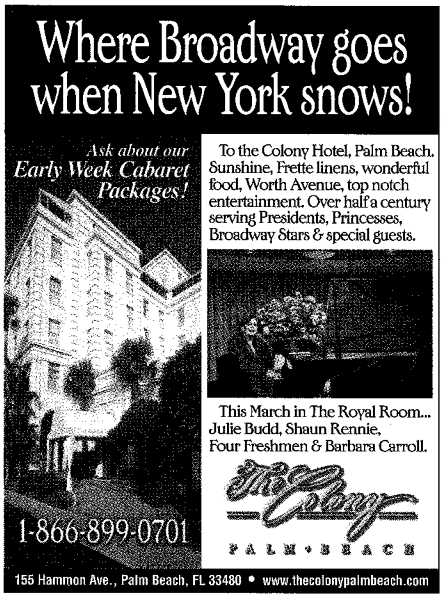
At the Frick, three swift chalk studies for a painting that is not in the show, "The Madonna of the Rose" (1529-30), develop the image of a hefty baby Jesus kicking his legs while supine on Mary's lap. She keeps him in place with one forearm and brings the other arm across her body, extending a long-fingered hand upon which one of his tiny hands rests. In a way that is characteristic of Mannerism—and typical of jazz, come to think of it—the picture departs from the main features of its theme to emphasize secondary and latent content: in this case, what baby boys are like and how pleasurable it is to imagine a woman who is both superbly aristocratic and a wonderful mother. These offbeats rivet attention on the artist's improvisatory flair—the audacity of his unerring line, the summary deftness with which he handles light and shadow. You could pass a glad hour at the show perusing nothing but Parmigianino's highlights and shadings. For the latter, he often uses simple hatching with straight lines, in passages that are thoroughly convincing except when you focus on them, whereupon they seem disdainfully perfunctory. What couldn't he do?

He couldn't be comfortable with paint, which locked his drawing down into design. *Disegno* (the untranslatable merging of drawing with pictorial design) was the intellectual glory of the Renaissance masters, although its practice was atrophying into formula by Parmigianino's time. Something painful happened when his graphic genius was transposed into colored oils: the template of Raphael's snugly constructed space and harmonic color took over, reducing the young painter's blazing originality to passive-aggressive weirdness—long necks, spooky eyes. There are some quite miserable early paintings in the Frick show. In one, Parmigianino tries to bring his hatching trick to bear; the result is terrible. He needed a new way to paint, which would not arrive until more than a half century after his death, with the birth of the Baroque. He was simultaneously ahead of his time—indeed, perhaps the closest painterly equivalents to his drawing appear in the eighteenth century, with Watteau and the rococo—and behind it, in ways that resonate now. What handicapped him—and impelled the long, sometimes fabulous stylistic detour of Mannerism generally, from the work of the majestic Venetians Tintoretto and Veronese to that of the extravagant El Greco—was the aesthetic and metaphysical orthodoxy of the Renaissance: pictures were complete fictions, at once analogous to the existing world and superior to it. Consider techniques of verisimilitude, first in Renaissance and then in Baroque style. The Renaissance imitation of reality holds up at any viewing distance; it is still essentially integral when seen from an inch away, sealing us off from what we are given to behold. When you approach a Baroque canvas, the illusion disintegrates into self-consciously expressive brushwork or other evidence, such as theatrical effects of raking light, that the painting inhabits the same world that we do. The little cyclone of gestures at the center of the studies for “Madonna of the Rose” is Baroque before the fact: a pocket of visceral, enterable space, punched into a Renaissance tableau.

Parmigianino knew enough of what he was doing to do it, but not enough to throw moral weight behind it in painting, which seems to have been—as it had to be—a chore to him. Only about fifty of his paintings survive, as against some eight hundred drawings. The paintings include numerous frescoes, and art history’s most talismanic objet before Marcel Duchamp: “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,” which Parmigianino painted on half of a wooden sphere when he was about twenty-one and soon to follow his ambition to Rome. Not in the Frick show (it resides in Vienna), this icon of narcissism displays a dandyish youth in an optically contorted room. One hand—his wealth and weapon, his Excalibur—is immense in the foreground. The work as much as says, “Here is an instrument that can do whatever you like. Not that you deserve it.”

It could be suggested that Parmigianino died of hating to do what was expected of him. His endless studies for public commissions may represent postponement as much as preparation. He so procrastinated on a church project in Parma—for eight years—that he was jailed for breach of contract; he escaped and passed his final year, in disgrace, in a town in Lombardy. (The cause of his death is reported as a “severe fever.”) Through everything, he drew. At the Frick, there are electrifying sheets on which he tries out multiple, slight variations of a character’s pose. If I could own one drawing, I might choose the nine sketched versions of Moses about to fling down the Commandment tablets—a kinetically imagined act of violence caught up in a heart-racing, machine-gun stutter.

In art today, Parmigianino figures obviously as a direct influence on what may be termed the neo-Mannerism of the painter John Currin, whose mastery of eclectic styles veers between eloquence and buffoonery. A comedy of confused aims—representation, caricature, poetry, burlesque—may be Currin’s master theme, proposing that the present culture enables nothing more from him and requires nothing less. But I detect a bit of Parmigianino’s anguish in the majority of our most gifted contemporary artists. It is a condition of being all dressed up, in talent and intelligence, with nowhere to go that isn’t the numbingly familiar white space of post-minimalist exhibition—a global archipelago of secular chapels that we attend to feel somewhat smart and sort of stimulated, never mind to what end. The strongest values that have real force in art now are talent and intelligence as such, expending themselves in arch charades of secondhand or inchoate meaning, for want of better employment. It’s as if everybody were jockeying for position on a stage where the curtain is always about to rise but never does. The Baroque took hold when Roman patrons, Spanish royals, and Dutch burghers determined, for many and various reasons, that art would be not only an attribute but a mirror of their lives. Our own Parmigianino-esque doldrums will end when cultivated people again know sufficiently, in robust consciousness, who they are and what they want. ♦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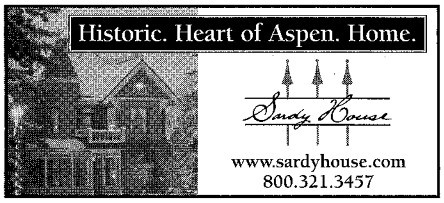
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BOOKS

MOTHER COURAGE

Kids, careers, and culture.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

CLAIRE BRETÉCHER

Does our society idealize working mothers, or their stay-at-home counterparts?

I grew up in a family that, save for its stray neuroses, was entirely typical of its place and time—the suburbs of New York in the late nineteen-sixties. My father, a doctor, left for work at eight and came back at six, except on Tuesdays, when he had extra office hours. My mother stayed home. This was true not only in a figurative sense but also, I now realize, in a fairly literal one; every day until we got to middle school, my brother and I trooped back to the house for lunch, and had she not been there, waiting for us, we would immediately have called the police. All of my friends' mothers stayed home in this way, and I don't recall thinking there was anything remarkable about it: that was just what mothers did.

Even as I was taking my mother's presence for granted, the whole category of stay-at-home motherhood was, of course, in the process of being exploded. Already in 1963, Betty Friedan had published "The Feminine Mystique." An instant sensation, the book sold three million copies in three years, mostly, one has to assume, to the disgruntled women it described. According to Friedan, the American homemaker might appear to be perfectly happy, but, in private, she was weeping into her ironing or popping Valium. A mother of three was quoted as follows:

> I wash the dishes, rush the older children off to school, dash out in the yard to cultivate the chrysanthemums, run back in to make a phone call about a committee meeting, help the youngest child build a blockhouse . . . then scamper down to the washing machines where my thrice-weekly laundry includes enough clothes to keep a primitive village going for an entire year. By noon I'm ready for a padded cell.

Friedan argued that "the comfortable concentration camp" that was domestic life was denying women their identities, turning them into "anonymous biological robot[s] in a docile mass." The only solution, she concluded, was to get them out of the house.

By the time I graduated from college, in 1983—with, as it happens, Friedan as the commencement speaker—the polemical message of "The Feminine Mystique" had been firmly established as the new orthodoxy. Almost without exception, my female classmates either went off to graduate school or found themselves jobs. If any of us harbored a desire to stay home in order to raise babies, we certainly didn't admit it. (Such a confession would have been received far less warmly than the announcement of, say, an intention to go into pornography.) We were going to make careers for ourselves and fit our children around them. In the future, that's just what mothers would do.

In a way, of course, we were right. Today, more than sixty per cent of women with children under the age of six are employed. Among mothers of children between the ages of six and seventeen, that figure rises to nearly eighty per cent. In another way, though, things have turned out to be a lot more complicated than my classmates and I suspected. It's hard to say how many women are weeping into their ironing these days, in part because no one seems to iron anymore. But the consensus is that the golden age of female fulfillment that Friedan envisioned—"this may be the next step in human evolution," she wrote—hasn't materialized.

Where there is angst in America, there is also opportunity, and the past few years have seen a veritable baby boom of books on motherhood. A recent, admittedly unscientific, search on Amazon yielded more than eight hundred titles published on the topic since 1999. Some are of a distinctly practical orientation ("Is There Really Sex After Kids?"), some offer general comfort ("Chocolate for a Mother's Heart"), and some are quite frankly alarmist: "The Mask of Motherhood: How Becoming a Mother Changes Everything and Why We Pretend It Doesn't," "The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued," and "What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Eludes the Modern Woman."

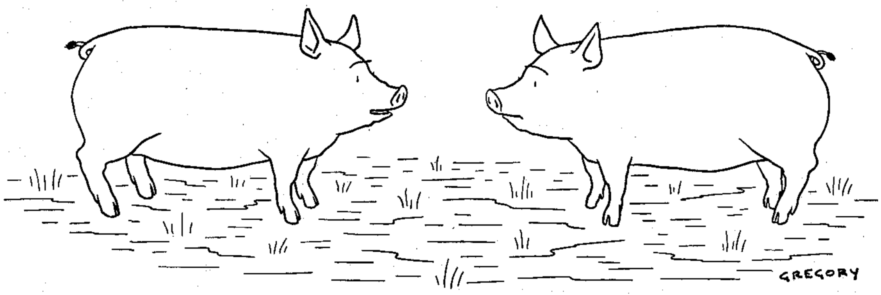
Just recently, two new books have focussed on what might be called the home-work problem: "Maternal Desire: On Children, Love, and the Inner Life" (Little, Brown; $25.95), by Daphne de Marneffe, and "The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women" (Free Press; $26), by Susan J. Douglas and Meredith W. Michaels. Each is essentially a work of consolation, although it seems a safe bet that any woman who reads both volumes will find one or the other maddening.

De Marneffe is a clinical psychologist and also, we quickly learn, a mother of three. She belongs, unapologetically, to the class of women who have enough education to find challenging work and enough wherewithal not to need it, a class that also, presumably, makes up her target audience. "Maternal Desire" both records and tries to theorize de Marneffe's decision to suspend her career and devote herself full time to child-rearing.

She takes as her starting point the birth of her first baby, which occurred just as she was beginning to build up a clinical practice. Each time she left the house to go to the office, she felt an "invisible tether" drawing her back. "I couldn't bear to leave our baby; when I was away I ached," she writes. As she had more babies, the difficulties—both emotional and practical—of maintaining a career continued to multiply. At one point, she hired a sitter who turned out to be chronically late. De Marneffe found the experience of letting her go so traumatic that, putting on makeup in preparation for the firing, she thought of the Sioux applying war paint, and Crazy Horse declaring, "It is a good day to die." At another point, seeking day care for her youngest child, she visited a woman who was minding six two-year-olds in her own home; the children, she saw, didn't always play nicely. De Marneffe couldn't bring herself to leave her son there. This, she realized, had less to do with his feelings—"I know he would have adjusted," she writes—than with her own.

Her feelings—the "invisible tether" pulling her back from the office, the reluctance to leave her son with a bunch of other two-year-olds—all arise from what she calls "maternal desire." As she defines it, the term refers to the desire to tend to one's children, rather than simply to bear them. According to de Marneffe, the feelings she experienced are near-universal. Just about every mother she knew or knew about had "grappled more or less explicitly" with the question "What should one do with the desire to care for one's children?" At the same time, she maintains that, as the result of a dominant ideology that devalues such feelings, they are almost never openly expressed: "It is almost as if women's desire for sex and their desire to mother have switched places in terms of taboo."

The notion that women want to be with their kids is crucial to the logic of de Marneffe's argument. With it, she inverts the whole Friedanian case against domesticity. In de Marneffe's view, it is a mistake to equate staying at home with forgoing an adult identity, because it is precisely in caring for children that an adult identity is forged. (As I write this, my five-year-old twins are marching around the house, naked, singing, "Ants! Ants! Ants wear underpants!") She realizes that this notion may strike some as hopelessly regressive; however, she assures us, it is not. "To take maternal desire as a valid focus of personal exploration is not a step backward but a step forward, toward greater awareness and a truer model of the self," she writes.



"I wouldn't mind living in a fundamentalist Islamic state."

The authors of "The Mommy Myth"—Douglas, a professor of communications studies at the University of Michigan, and Michaels, a professor of philosophy at Smith College—are also mothers. But they allude to their own experiences only rarely, and, when they do, it tends to be with a rather different inflection. "We adore our kids—for example, neither one of us has ever locked them up in dog crates in the basement (although we have, of course, been tempted)," they observe.

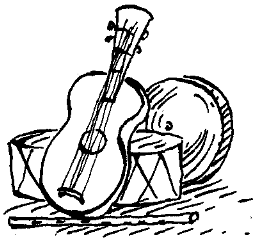
Douglas's previous book, "Where the Girls Are," was a study of how the mass media shaped a generation's views about itself. (That generation happened to be hers.) In "The Mommy Myth," she and Michaels return to much the same sources—sitcoms, women's magazines, television news clips—to determine how motherhood is being represented or, more often in their view, misrepresented. Like de Marneffe, Douglas and Michaels are concerned about a dominant discourse that is oppressive to women; it's just that the discourse that they identify as dominant is totally different. They are particularly aggrieved by images that promote the belief that, "to be a remotely decent mother, a woman has to devote her entire physical, psychological, emotional, and intellectual being, 24/7, to her children." Such images, they maintain, have been multiplying in recent years, a trend they dub the "new momism." What they find especially pernicious about this trend—and here they could be speaking directly about "Maternal Desire"—is that its anti-feminist message is frequently cloaked in feminist terms. "The new momism *seems* to be much more hip and progressive than the feminine mystique, because now, of course, mothers can and do work outside the home," they write. "It's not that mothers can't hack it (1950's thinking). It's that progressive mothers refuse to hack it."

Typical of "The Mommy Myth" is the chapter devoted to the genre of the celebrity-mom profile. As the authors point out, these profiles always have the same elements: Kirstie Alley gushes to *InStyle* that being a mother has given her "a whole new purpose" in life; Vanna White gushes to *Good Housekeeping* that motherhood has changed her "whole attitude about a career." Women who could do anything are quoted (inevitably) as saying they want nothing more than to stay home with their kids. Jodie Foster, for instance, tells *People* that raising her sons "is so much more interesting than anything else I do." In Douglas and Michaels's view, the fact that celebrities, pretty much by definition, are not staying at home with their kids doesn't prevent these profiles from setting a standard for motherhood that ordinary working mothers find impossible to meet, making them feel that much worse about their ordinary lives. (Why ordinary women keep buying the magazines that run such profiles, they do not say.)

"The Mommy Myth" tends to be vague on questions of agency. At certain points, the authors seem to suggest that the "new momism" is a marketing phenomenon or a grab at ratings; at others, that it is a vast right-wing conspiracy. Like the landlord in a nineteenth-century melodrama, Ronald Reagan makes frequent appearances, cutting funds for day-care centers, running up the deficit, and muttering about how women in the labor force drive up the unemployment statistics. It's assumed that federal policy and the conventions of celebrity journalism are somehow related, although in a more rigorous world this is precisely what would have had to be proved.

Douglas and Michaels see themselves as writing in the tradition of Friedan, even though theirs is quite a different perspective. Friedan forecast that, once enough women entered the workforce, the necessary social changes—for example, the establishment of "professionally run nurseries"—would follow. It falls to Douglas and Michaels to explain why this hasn't happened, and, indeed, why such a prospect seems even less likely today than it did forty years ago.

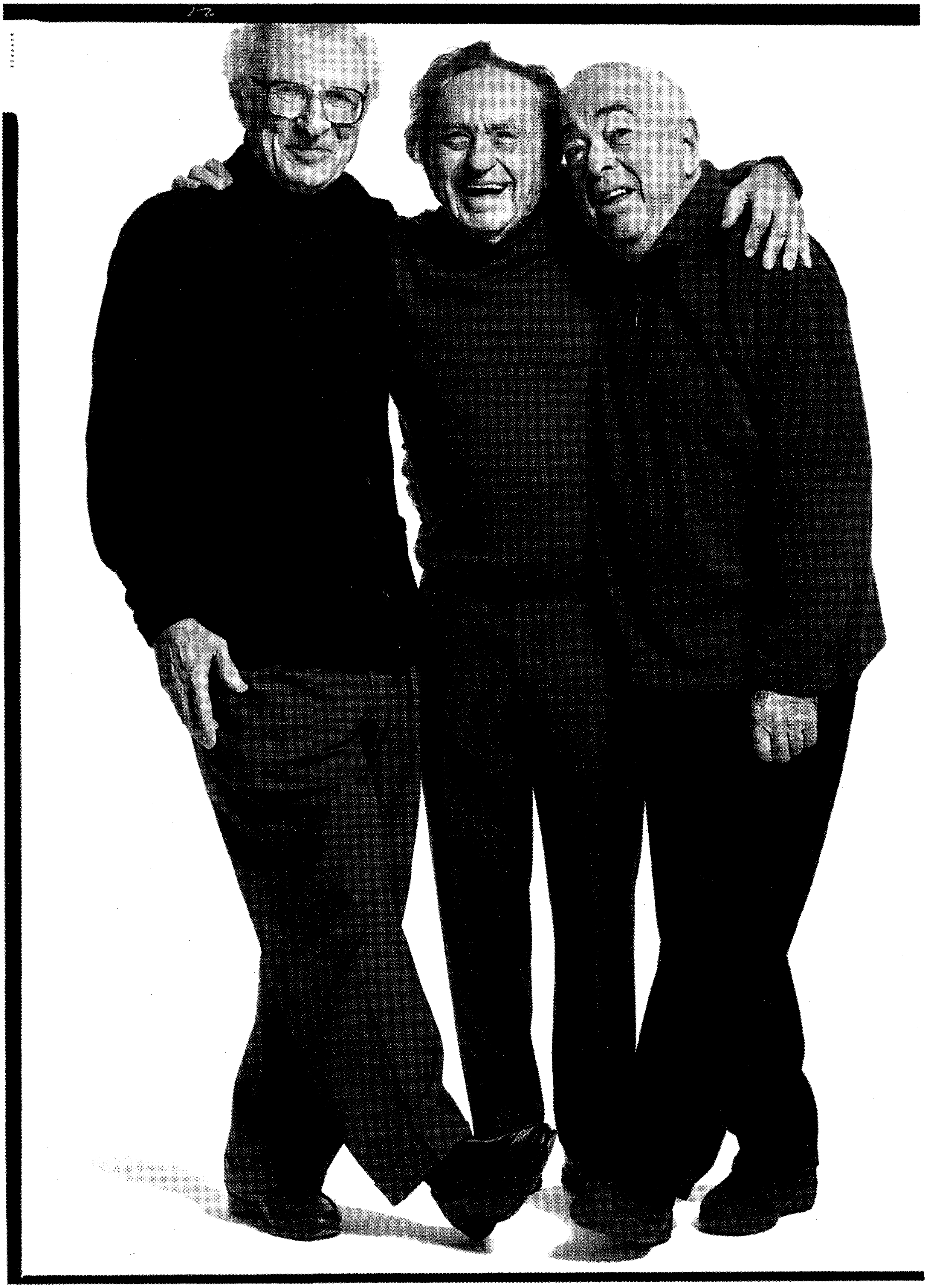
As with the "new momism," their explanations branch out in two directions. On the one hand, they blame the media, arguing that charges of abuse by day-care workers have received disproportionate—and sensationalized—coverage. On the other hand, they blame conservative politicians in Washington. (The machinations surrounding a day-care-financing bill that was vetoed by President Nixon in 1971, apparently at the urging of Pat Buchanan, are chronicled in great detail.) Both of these accounts tend to diminish women, casting them as impotent or, at least, as politically unsophisticated. By contrast, de Marneffe's explanation for the day-care shortage, which is that it reflects women's ambivalence about leaving their children with others, places the blame—or, if you prefer, the credit—squarely with mothers themselves. If we really wanted a better child-care system, she suggests, by now we would have forced the government to provide us with one.



Not long after I read "The Mommy Myth," I took my three boys to the local public library. In the children's section, they came across a magazine with a picture of a cupcake on the cover. Above this picture, in large letters, was the word "kids" and, in much smaller ones, the words "Martha Stewart." I knew I was in trouble—Douglas and Michaels accuse Stewart of practicing a peculiarly reactionary brand of "proactive domesticity"—but few academic arguments have as much force as persistent whining. I let my sons check the magazine out, and for days they salivated over a spread entitled "A Whole Year of Cupcakes," which ran through the months in a series of increasingly baroque confections. (The July cupcake was decorated with a flag made from tiny strips of red licorice; the August one was a clown constructed—somehow—by cutting a conical wedge out of the center, filling the resulting hole with frosting, using the cutout piece as a hat, and then topping the whole thing with a pompom made of buttercream coated with sprinkles.) After careful consideration, I agreed to make September—an "apple"—which was decorated with red icing, a green candy leaf, and a pretzel-stick stem. When I was done, the cupcakes resembled nothing so much as a failed horticultural experiment. My husband took one look at them and pretended to throw up. The boys, however, seemed blind to their deficiencies. The youngest, and most sentimental, went so far as to pronounce them "beautiful."

One of the complexities of thinking about motherhood is that it's so hard to decide what—or, really, whose—criteria to apply. Your spouse's? Your kids'? Your kid's class mother's? Your boss's? Although, logically, it is impossible for both "Maternal Desire" and "The Mommy Myth" to be right about what constitutes the prevailing ideology, each, I suspect, speaks to something real about the way that many mothers feel these days, which is that they are failing to measure up, personally or professionally. But—and here is where things get even trickier—how worried should we be about what these women, which is to say ourselves, are feeling? If a woman wants to take time off from her career to raise a family, and if she can afford to do so, what more can she reasonably desire? That everyone else act only in ways that validate her decision? Conversely, if she wants to work, and can find someone to care for her children, does that really mean Jodie Foster has to stop nattering on to *People* about her babies?

The tradition of lament that began with Friedan is, as has often been observed, based on an unspoken assumption of privilege. Just about the only people who come in for praise in "The Feminine Mystique" are those women who, in spite of the social mores of their time, went off and pursued careers. In Friedan's words, these women "had problems, of course, tough ones," which included "juggling their pregnancies," "having to give up good assignments when their husbands were transferred," and "finding nurses and housekeepers." Not a single one of "The Feminine Mystique" 's three hundred and fifty-plus pages is devoted to the difficulties of the nurses and the housekeepers, who, Friedan has to have realized, had things a good bit tougher than their employers. These same underpaid women are still largely missing from the literature today. Meanwhile, the more fortunate remain just that. Choosing between work and home is, in the end, a problem only for those who have a choice. In this sense, it is, like so many "problems" of twenty-first-century life, a problem of not having enough problems. ♦



THE THEATRE

BITTERSWEET

"Fiddler on the Roof" and "Bridge and Tunnel."

BY JOHN LAHR

The thrill of "Fiddler on the Roof" (at the Minskoff) begins with its first beat, when the beleaguered milkman Tevye (the bighearted Alfred Molina) describes the precariousness of shtetl life. "And how do we keep our balance?" he asks us. "That I can tell you in a word." He turns upstage and stamps his foot. "Tradition," he says. It's the signal that launches the march of the entire village of Anatevka, singing in celebration of its closed world.

From that first ravishing moment, amid birch trees and the crepuscular glow of flickering kerosene lamps, the static comfort of the Old World community, where every person has a place and a role, is dissected before our eyes. Of the many Jewish traditions that go unmentioned in the terrific song, the most pervasive is the one to which the show itself is eloquent witness: the storytelling tradition. "Fiddler on the Roof," which is based on the tales of Sholem Aleichem, is a seamless collaboration of an especially cunning book by Joseph Stein, music by Jerry Bock, lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, and choreography by Jerome Robbins. In this elegant revival, the star, the director, the costume designer, and the set designer are English; they bring to the production a certain cultural detachment, which imposes a powerful lucidity on the story and allows its moral debate to gather proper poetic momentum. The production's panache reverses the English joke "Look British, think Yiddish"; in this "Fiddler," it's indubitably a case of "Think British, look Yiddish."

The show is greater than the sum of its parts, which is a rarity on Broadway. The expert director David Leveaux has positioned the musicians upstage and visible among the trees, so that the tale seems almost to emerge out of their sound; Tom Pye's shrewd, understated set and Vicki Mortimer's witty costumes conjure a captivating sense of place—provincial Russia at the turn of the twentieth century. Onstage, the totem of storytelling is the Fiddler (Nick Danielson), who first appears perched on the gray makeshift beams of the roof above the proceedings but prowls around the edges of events playing his occasional woeful measures when life seems at its most fragile. The bittersweet strains of his violin represent the invisible thread of narrative—the signature that carries in its distinctive ambivalent refrain the culture's memory of loss and of wisdom. Disclaimers to the contrary—"Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as . . . as a fiddler on the roof," Tevye says—the Fiddler represents the emotional cement that binds and defines the tribe. At the finale, the members of the community are forced by the Cossacks to sell up and move off their land into exile. Upstage, silhouetted against an ochre scrim, the Fiddler hands his instrument to a young boy. The image, which is an added visual grace note to the original production, plays as a passing on of the narrative tradition and a foreshadowing of the American musical itself, most of whose great practitioners—Kern, Gershwin, Rodgers, Arlen, Bernstein, Sondheim, et al.—were "Red Sea pedestrians," as Dame Edna would say.

On the surface, "Fiddler on the Roof" is all romance. Tevye has five beloved daughters; however, he is a poor man, who has neither the status nor the wealth to insure them a good marriage. He kvetches to God about money—"So what would have been so terrible if I had a small fortune?" Tevye asks him before beginning the showstopping melisma of "If I Were a Rich Man." The daughters' plea is to God's romantic stand-in, the omnipotent being in whose power is their destiny on earth: the matchmaker. With deft concision, Harnick's splendid lyrics spell out the girls' desires: "Find me a find / Catch me a catch."

At issue, beneath the hubbub of husbands and happiness, is Jewish patriarchy, a bulwark that is beginning to crack under progressive rumblings from the outside world. Each daughter offers a challenge to Tevye's authority, which allows many happy opportunities for the excellent Molina to be both gruff and bluff. When Hodel (the appealing Laura Michelle Kelly) and Perchik (Robert Petkoff), a graduate of Kiev University with newfangled ideas, decide to marry, they ask Tevye only for his blessing. Molina's hound-dog look goes from forlorn to fierce; he can't believe his ears. He bleats, "Tradition! / They're not even asking permission." When Chava (Tricia Paoluccio) goes off with the Gentile Fyedka (David Ayers), Tevye ostracizes her. Chava's sense of annihilation is given brilliant theatrical shape. As she stands outcast by her father's rage, a phalanx of townsfolk singing "Tradition" sweep past her; she is engulfed by the scrum and wiped out before our eyes. Having arranged a good marriage for Tzeitel (Sally Murphy) with the town's widowed butcher, Tevye is poleaxed by the news that she won't marry the old man; in fact, she has pledged herself to the gangling, impecunious tailor, Motel (the droll John Cariani). Tevye saves face with his ambitious wife by faking a nightmare so vivid that it convinces even her that Motel is the man for Tzeitel. As the floor tilts up, the two young lovers fly over the bed, and Leveaux surrounds the put-upon parents with a beautiful, surreal, Bosch-like commotion. In dreams, the young may float free, but in Tevye's world the notion of free will and personal happiness are acid thoughts. "Where do they think they are?" he sings. "America?"

By the end, however, America is the horizon to which many in Anatevka set their sights, including Tevye. This unstated but sure knowledge gives "Fiddler on the Roof" its satisfying ironic aftertaste. Leveaux's lyrical production savors all the show's compelling Old World–New World resonance. As the townsfolk shuttle off to reinvent themselves in exile, the modern audience knows all too well

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Sheldon Harnick, Joseph Stein, and Jerry Bock, creators of "Fiddler." The first production opened in 1964 and ran for eight years.

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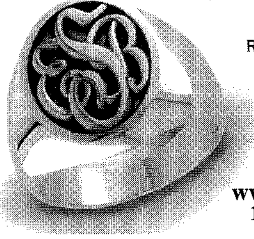

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what they will find—a world turned even more topsy-turvy than the one the show sings about, where society will not dedicate itself to God but, instead, make a god of the self. The gains in personal freedom will be bought at a spiritual price. Every well-sculpted second of "Fiddler on the Roof" has within it a sense of both regret and release, which make the comic and tragic elements of the story at once nostalgic, evergreen, and adult.

The solitude and separation that "Fiddler" foreshadows are borne out in the array of immigrant voices that Sarah Jones channels in "Bridge and Tunnel" (directed by Tony Taccone, at the Bleecker Street). Jones, who is African-American and a sort of multicultural mynah bird, lays our mongrel nation before us with gorgeous, pitch-perfect impersonations of the rarely heard or dramatized. The conceit of her eloquent one-woman show is that we are at a café whose poetry evening is run by a punning Pakistani called Mohammed Ali; every participant is called in turn to the mike, and, indeed, is a turn—Dominican, Chinese, Jewish, Russian, Vietnamese, Jamaican, Mexican, Jordanian. Each person's story sheds some refracted light on the struggle to be an American and to make society deliver its promise. The speaking of poetry is a pursuit of happiness as the framers of the Constitution meant it: it's an act of self-definition.

Above the stage is a banner that reads "I.A.M.A.P.O.E.T.T.O.O." Although Ali explains that this stands for "Immigrant and Multiculturalist American Poets or Enthusiasts Travelling Toward Optimistic Openness," no joke can disguise Jones's jejune self-consciousness about the poetic import of her characterizations. No matter how brilliantly Jones inhabits her characters, she is narrating rather than dramatizing their essence. In order for her characters to lay substantial claim on the imagination, they need a story larger than the repetitive revue format that the show provides. This puts her and her uncanny mimetic gift on the horns of a dilemma. Sooner or later, she's going to have to drop the bravura ventriloquism and admit herself. Meanwhile, "Bridge and Tunnel" is an excellent showcase for Jones's fierce intelligence. She throws off a lot of light, which is what stars—even small ones—do. ♦

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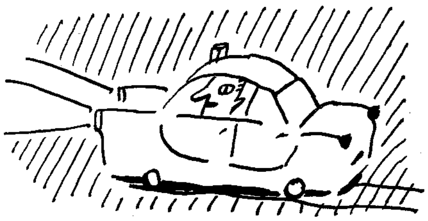
BRIEFLY NOTED

Tommy the Cork, *by David McKean (Steerforth; $25).* When Lyndon Johnson was starting out as a congressman, in 1937, F.D.R. handed him a slip of paper. "Here's a telephone number," he said. "When you get to Washington, ask for Tom." At the time, Thomas (the Cork) Corcoran was a New Deal official whose modest title didn't convey his influence, but he soon left government and, with dazzling speed and cynicism, set up shop as the prototypical K Street lobbyist. Many lobbyists can solve regulatory problems; it's the rare one who can get the C.I.A. to buy an airline, hire Evita to hawk aspirin, and help orchestrate a military coup on behalf of the United Fruit Company. McKean, a Senate staffer who works for John Kerry, attempts to portray his subject as a fallen idealist—a tough sell, given that Corcoran doesn't seem to have ever had ideals to lose.

The Siberian Curse, *by Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy (Brookings; $18.95).* Solzhenitsyn once noted that Siberia offers "plenty of room in which to correct all our idiocies." For centuries, the vast expanse east of the Urals has been a place of mythic promise and peril, its frigid terrain and unending horizons essential to Russia's sense of itself. This incisive polemic, however, argues that if Russians hope to attain prosperity they should abandon their eastern territories, where not a single settlement is economically viable. Of all the political pathologies to emerge from the Soviet experiment, none were so grandiose and manifestly disastrous as the attempt to fashion an industrial utopia in the Siberian wasteland. The policy left nearly a third of Russia's hundred and forty-five million inhabitants stranded in places where even basic survival requires a constant and costly stream of supplies. The authors make their case vigorously, but they recognize that the bureaucratic barriers to leaving remain severe, and that national myths are potent.



Love Monkey, *by Kyle Smith (Morrow; $23.95).* Tom Farrell, an editor in his early thirties at *Tabloid* (a thinly veiled version of the New York *Post*), can't figure out how to navigate Manhattan's dating scene. Tom knows women, but he has a Goldilocks problem: none of the women he knows are just right for him. In this chronicle of four and a half months in the life of a hapless, single city-dweller, Smith blends hilarity and cynicism in order to adapt the Bridget Jones formula to a male perspective. A brief detour into a post-9/11 subplot somewhat arrests the comic flow, but it is actually one of the book's most interesting sections, and imparts to the hectic seduction games a nagging sense of unease, along with some genuine insight into the dilemmas of daily journalism.

All That Is Gone, *by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, translated from the Indonesian by Willem Samuels (Hyperion East; $23.95).* In the last story of this collection from Indonesia's preëminent writer, the author himself makes a short appearance, stricken with self-doubt and grieved by the evil events he recounts. But he reminds himself, "You must be willing to tell stories about the loss of hope." A sense of duty is perhaps natural for a writer who spent nearly two decades as a political prisoner under three different regimes. But the striking achievement of these stories is an unshakable innocence of voice and a willingness to leave judgment to the reader. Pramoedya's art is made more of sadness than of anger, and he is particularly adept at narrating from a child's perspective—as when a six-year-old boy sees his best friend, a girl of eight, married off, beaten by her husband, and, after she flees, made a social outcast.

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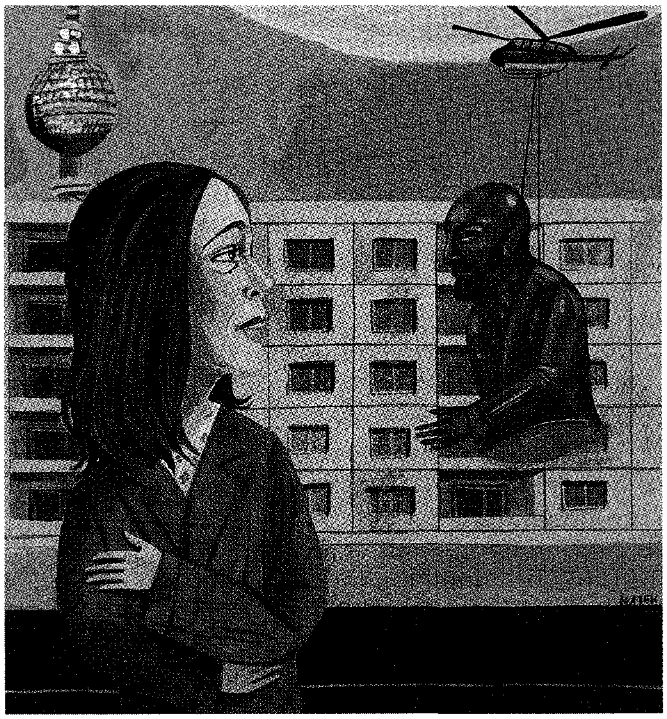
THE CURRENT CINEMA

WOMEN AND THE SYSTEM

"Goodbye, Lenin!" and "Osama."

BY DAVID DENBY

Christiane (Katrin Sass), the saintly Communist in the German social comedy "Goodbye, Lenin!," has a noble brow, a steady gaze, and fine, straight hair. She's a handsome woman who would disdain as frivolous any attempt to make herself beautiful. Living in East Berlin with her family in 1989, she doesn't notice the dun-colored uniformity all around her; if she did, she might say that drabness is a virtue. Christiane couldn't be called a Stalinist, yet she's a true believer, a dim celebrant of Communist kitsch who listens to clichés about sacrificing for the glorious future without asking if she's being lied to. Her own sacrifice is severe: her husband, harassed by the secret police, departs for the West. But, after she recovers from shock and depression, she forgoes all thought of personal happiness and devotes herself to Party causes. She expresses solidarity with the oppressed of Mozambique; she teaches ghastly little uniformed children to sing Party songs. "Goodbye, Lenin!," which has been an enormous hit in Germany, satirizes her, but very gently, and this gentleness feels right. Christiane's intelligence does not rise to the level at which her illusions might become tragic. Yet she's too decent a woman to make fun of. She's the unwitting heroine of a national fable.



Katrin Sass as an East German woman living in the past.

OLAF HAJEK

The movie is narrated by her son, Alex (Daniel Brühl), a smart young go-getter who's completely wised up about Communism but adores his mother and wants to protect her dreams. Not an easy job, it turns out. After a heart attack, Christiane falls into a coma for eight months in 1989 and 1990, and, during her long sleep, the Wall comes down and Erich Honecker's regime disintegrates. Communism has ended. What can Alex do? When his mother awakens, he takes her home, puts her to bed, where she is supposed to rest, and creates for her benefit a kind of ersatz reality—a living museum of Communism—in which nothing has changed. He gets his cranky sister and a group of embarrassed neighbors to take part in the charade; he works with a filmmaker buddy who fakes a variety of news broadcasts about the unending triumphs of a regime that no longer exists. Christiane remains happy in her socialist paradise.

"Goodbye, Lenin!" was written by Bernd Lichtenberg and Wolfgang Becker and directed by Becker, whose background is in German TV, and it's not hard to see why the movie was a hit. At times, it plays like a series of TV skits, some of them funny and incisive, some rather larkish and insubstantial. On the surface, the filmmakers work in a style of tender slapstick. Alex and his co-conspirators display a considerable nutty ingenuity in keeping the truth from Christiane. When a huge red Coca-Cola banner goes up outside Christiane's window, replacing a red Communist banner, Alex improvises a story about the brew's having been invented in East Germany—Coke, it turns out, was a Communist triumph all along. The Western consumer goods flooding into East Berlin, he insists, belong to disillusioned people returning from the corrupt West to the socialist fatherland. Communism wins again! Alex and his band of artificers bring off the mock triumphs of the regime with fervent glee, and the movie itself tries to keep up a façade of good cheer. Christiane's children scramble to find her stash of East German currency before it becomes worthless, and one feels the presence of some half-remembered Continental farce working its way through the plot. Yet beneath the slapstick surface a sombre German heart beats in mournful rhythm: the point of the fable, we slowly realize, is that Communism in Germany was always an ersatz reality—that for forty years Party leaders were creating a large-scale version of the fiction that Alex creates in his mother's bedroom. And we can sense that Lichtenberg and Becker meant the comatose Christiane to stand in for all the true believers—people nearly unconscious in their inability to admit how thoroughly the system was failing.

"Goodbye, Lenin!" is more than eager to mock Communism—a statue of the pointy-bearded revolutionary gets ignominiously helicoptered out of Berlin to a dump. But the movie couldn't be called pro-capitalist, either. "Goodbye, Lenin!" is a record of that ragged, unhappy time when one system had failed and another was awkwardly, crudely trying to take its place. Lichtenberg and Becker appear to have an obsession with that semi-addictive sweet fizz Coca-Cola, which they treat as a kind of creeping stain of evil. Coke is everywhere, and, in a further indignity, Alex's sister drops her studies and goes to work at a Burger King, where she becomes a chirping parrot in a bright, pink-and-yellow uniform. From the movie's point of view, capitalism is crass, disruptive, vulgarizing, undermining; it arrives bearing shoddy consumer goods and little else.

Well, the Germans went through hell in the twentieth century, and they have the right to express their exhaustion and disgust. A disconsolate little irony works its way through the story. Alex and the cohort of neighbors and friends, all working together to maintain a lie, exemplify the kind of communal humanism that the system was supposed to produce on the largest scale. So Communism as a triumphant system may be a fiction, but the human desire for coöperation lives on, and the movie pays homage to that impulse. Alex even falls in love with the world he has created for his mom; he can rest there, sleep, whereas capitalism never gives anyone a moment's peace. A capitalist might retort that the movie itself could use more pep and a wilder sense of humor. Despite all the jokes about drabness, "Goodbye, Lenin!" is often drab—the color is washed out, the lighting flat. Yet the movie is sweetly enjoyable as a sardonic elegy for a dream that went bust. It lets both the system and its recumbent heroine down easily, with a wistful sigh of regret rather than a blast of scorn.

"Goodbye, Lenin!" is about a regime ending in bland incompetence; "Osama," the first film to come out of Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban, chronicles the intrusive malice of a tyranny in full control. Again and again, groups of women are working or enjoying themselves in some haven until a cry goes up—"The Taliban is coming!"—at which point they spasmodically pull on their blue-hooded burkas and slump into a posture of submission. Sometimes, the Taliban thugs, enraged men with thick black beards and old rifles, barge in; at other times, we merely hear them as they issue orders and demands from behind the camera, an unnerving directorial ploy that places us in the position of controlling the women. The movie is set in Afghanistan in the late nineties, when paranoia masked itself in religious purity and women could be punished for exposing so much as an ankle. Who, after all, is being protected by enshrouding women like old furniture? Is it the women, who, presumably, would be assaulted by men if they showed an inch of skin? Or is it the men, who fear the smallest expression of female sexuality?

The heroine of "Osama" is a twelve-year-old girl (Marina Golbahari) who runs afoul of the most essential taboos. Even though her father is dead and the family has no food, her mother and grandmother are forbidden to work. So they cut the little girl's hair, pass her off as a boy (another child gives her the name Osama to protect her), and get her a job in a shop. But then one of the thugs sweeps her into a roundup of prepubescent boys, who are briskly marched through the street and sent to a madrassa for religious training. At the school, the children have to endure a bizarre lecture from an old mullah about how to wash their genitals after a nocturnal emission. Their lust has to be cleansed; but the mullah's, we learn in a blow that lands like the blade of a guillotine in the movie's horrifying last scene, is under no constraints, even in advanced old age.

"Osama," which was made for less than fifty thousand dollars (the camera and crew were provided free), is a triumph of disciplined art and tempered outrage. The forty-one-year-old writer-director, Siddiq Barmak, an Afghan film nut who never recovered from seeing "Lawrence of Arabia" as a boy, has gifts of vision and temperament equal to those of the finest directors now working. He and the cinematographer, Ebrahim Ghafuri, make us experience Afghanistan as a kind of ruined paradise—we're aware of the ceremonial weight of the gray and sand-colored buildings, the arches and filigree detail around the windows that suggest the discarded graces of an ancient culture. "Osama" is deeply shocking, yet understated. There is a nearly iconic use of such repeated imagery as shots of men slowly keying elaborate locks that pen the women up. The groups of faceless women in their burkas are like fields of lavender swaying in the wind; the boys in their white turbans bobbing over the Koran as they drone the holy text are a vision of beauty and foreboding at the same time. And Marina Golbahari, a real-life street beggar, has the kind of eyes that haven't been seen in the cinema since the great, postwar Italian neo-realist movies—a child's eyes that have registered everything. The beauty of "Osama" intensifies and purifies its pathos; the movie is an outright miracle. ♦

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THE BACK PAGE BY STEVE MARTIN

STUDIO SCRIPT NOTES ON "THE PASSION"

Dear Mel,

We love, *love* the script! The ending works great. You'll be getting a call from us to start negotiations for the book rights.

Humphrey Bogart
Roy Rogers

—Love the Jesus character. So likable. He can't seem to catch a break! We identify with him because of it. One thing: I think we need to clearly state "the rules." Why doesn't he use his superpowers to save himself? Our creative people suggest that you could simply cut away to two spectators:

SPECTATOR ONE

Why doesn't he use his superpowers to save himself?

SPECTATOR TWO

He can only use his powers to help others, never himself.

—Does it matter which garden? Gethsemane is hard to say, and Eden is a much more recognizable garden. Just thinking out loud.

—Our creative people suggest a clock visual fading in and out in certain scenes, like the Last Supper bit: "Thursday, 7:43 P.M.," or "Good Friday, 5:14 P.M."

—Love the repetition of "Is it I?" Could be very funny. On the eighth inquiry, could Jesus just give a little look of exasperation into the camera? Breaks frame, but could be a riot.

—Also, could he change water into wine in Last Supper scene? Would be a great moment, and it's legit. History compression is a movie tradition and could really brighten up the scene. Great trailer moment, too.

—Love the flaying.

—Could the rabbis be Hispanic? There's lots of hot Latino actors now, could give us a little zing at the box office. Research says there's some historical justification for it.

—Possible title change: "Lethal Passion." Kinda works. The more I say it out loud, the more I like it.

—Is there someplace where Jesus could be using an iBook? You know, now that I say it, it sounds ridiculous. Strike that. But think about it. Maybe we start a shot in Heaven with Jesus thoughtfully closing the top?

—Love the idea of Monica Bellucci as Mary Magdalene (yow!). Our creative people suggest a name change to Heather. Could skew our audience a little younger.

—Love Judas. Such a great villain. Our creative people suggest that he's a little complicated. Couldn't he be one thing? Just bad? Gives the movie much more of a motor. Also, thirty pieces of silver is not going to get anyone excited. I think it'd be very simple to make him a "new millionaire." Bring in the cash on a tray. Great dilemma that the audience can identify with.

—Minor spelling error: on page 18, in the description of the bystanders, there should be a space between the words "Jew" and "boy."

—Merchandising issue: it seems the Cross image has been done to death and is public domain—we can't own it. Could the Crucifixion scene involve something else? A Toyota would be wrong, but maybe there's a shape we can copyright, like a wagon wheel?

—I'm assuming "The dialogue is in Aramaic" is a typo for "American." If not, call me on my cell, or I'm at home all weekend.

By the way, I'm sending a group of staffers on a cruise to the North Pole, coincidentally around the time of your picture's release. Would love to invite your dad!

See you at the movies!

Yours,
Stan

BARRY BLITT

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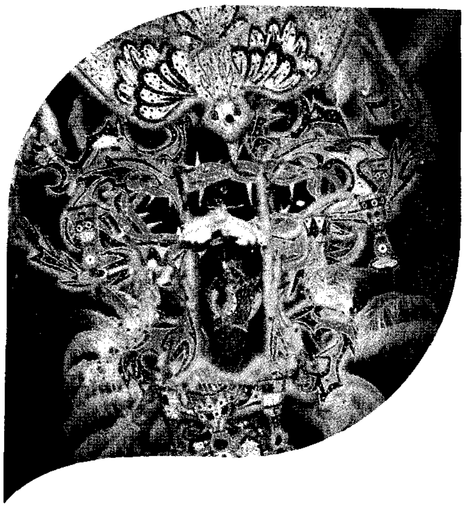

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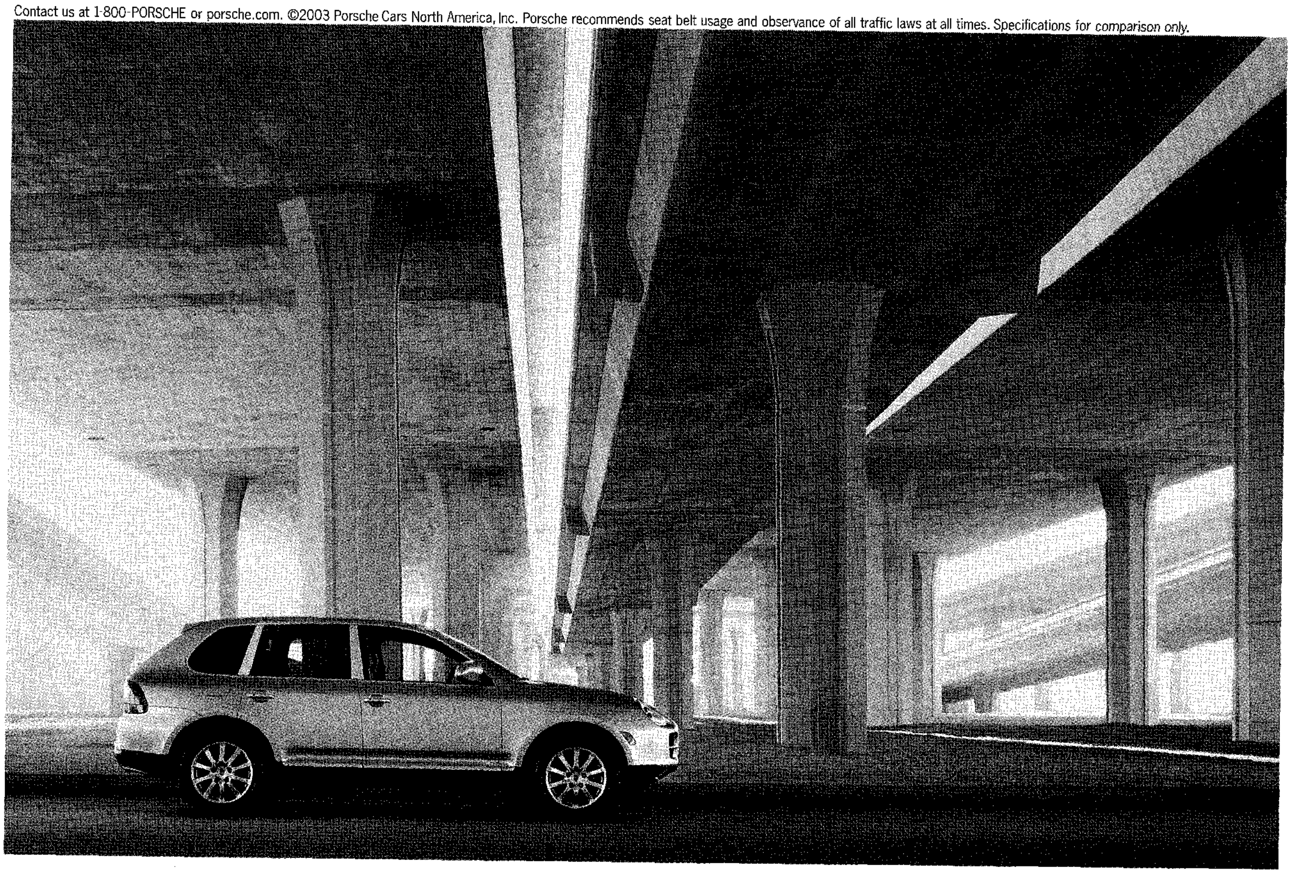

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